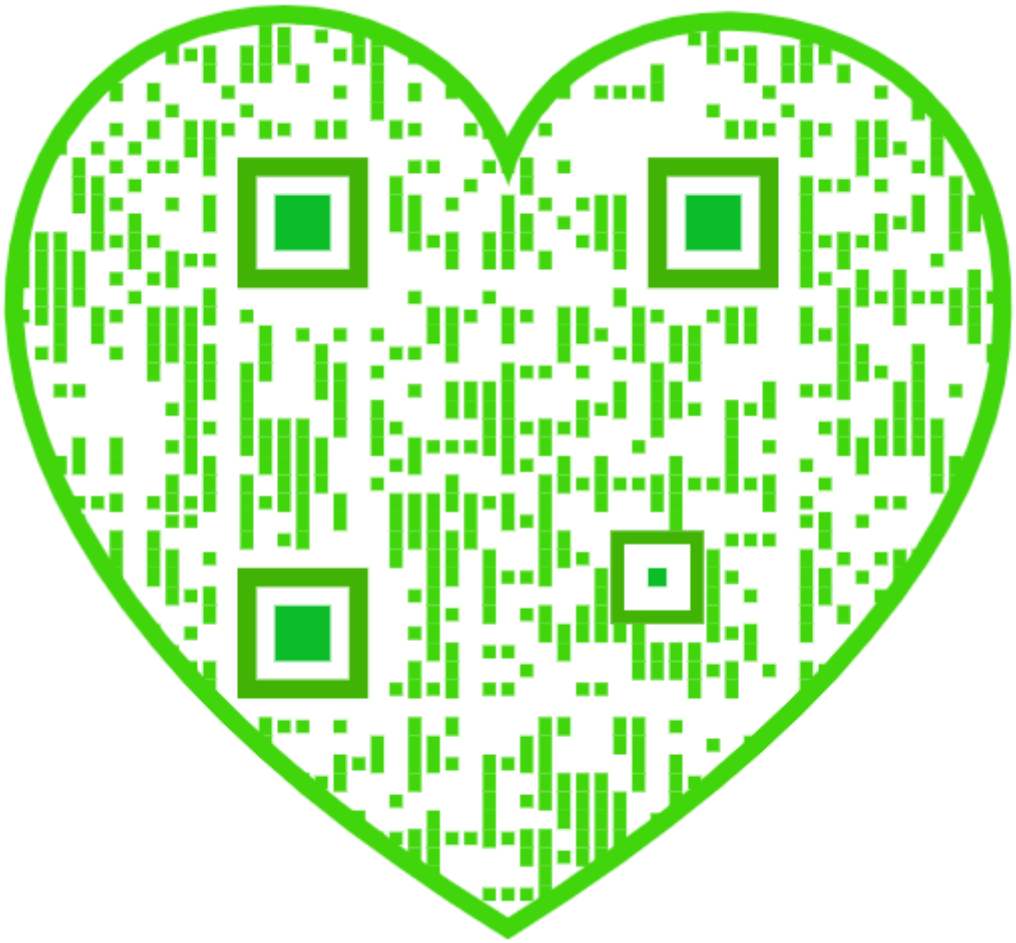

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GREAT FISHING STORIES

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GREAT FISHING STORIES

Compiled and with a Foreword by

Edwin Valentine Mitchell

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FOREWORD

No good fisherman, it is said, ever tells a story under oath. Yet in spite of the popular notion that all fish stories are fiction, there is a distinction between those which are purely recitals of presumable fact and those which are frankly narratives of fancy. While doubtless a substratum of truth underlies many of the angling tales included in this collection, all are believed to be fiction or at least fanciful reporting, written primarily to interest and entertain the reader. At any rate, fiction rather than fact was the common denominator used in assembling the stories.

Strangely enough, few similar collections of angling yarns seem to have been made in this country, although, as Philip Wylie has pointed out, fishing is our great national sport. Far more money is spent by anglers on their favorite pursuit than is expended by the crowds which patronize the so-called spectator sports of baseball, football, boxing, et cetera. Only a

few million Americans play golf and tennis, but ordinarily some twenty million go fishing every year, not counting those who fish for a living.

All, or nearly all, the stories which follow are by professional writers, but writers, it is safe to say, who are or were also good fishermen. For it is difficult to imagine any non-angling author having the temerity to write about so ancient and refined a sport as fishing. It is no reflection on the work of those fishermen who are only incidentally writers that they are not more fully represented. Many of them write as skilfully as they fish, although it may as well be admitted that much that is written by anglers for anglers does not rate very high marks as literature. Here it was simply a case of the choice being a wide one and the election happening to go the other way.

In time and space the stories chosen cover a wide range. Frank Forester, W. C. Prime, and Judge Haliburton, the author of *Sam Slick*, wrote nearly a century ago. The trouting episode by Henry Ward Beecher is from his three-decker work, *Norwood, or Village Life in New England*, published in 1867. The stories by Frank Stockton and Guy de Maupassant date from the eighteen-eighties; while those by Henry van Dyke and Irving Bacheller were published at the turn of the century. Henry van Dyke said that "Crocker's Hole" by R. D. Blackmore, the author of *Lorna Doone*, was the greatest English fishing story. It first appeared in book form in *Tales from the Tell-*

ing-House, published in 1896. All the other stories are of much later vintage.

Of the eighteen tales, one is French, four are English, and the rest American. The latter range from Canada to Florida and beyond, and the collection as a whole covers a variety of fishing. Methods of catching fish may differ somewhat in different countries, but fish themselves behave pretty much the same the whole world over.

Obviously not a book of instruction in the craft of fishing, *Great Fishing Stories* may nevertheless enhance the pleasure of exercising that craft in retrospect and prospect.

EDWIN VALENTINE MITCHELL

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GREAT FISHING STORIES

BIG TWO-HEARTED RIVER

by Ernest Hemingway

Part I

The train went on up the track out of sight, around one of the hills of burnt timber. Nick sat down on the bundle of canvas and bedding the baggage man had pitched out of the door of the baggage car. There was no town, nothing but the rails and the burned-over country. The thirteen saloons that had lined the one street of Seney had not left a trace. The foundations of the Mansion House hotel stuck up above the ground. The stone was chipped and split by the fire. It was all that was left of the town of Seney. Even the surface had been burned off the ground.

Nick looked at the burned-over stretch of hillside, where he had expected to find the scattered houses of the town and then walked down the railroad track to the bridge over the river. The river was there. It swirled against the log spiles of the bridge. Nick looked down into the clear, brown water, colored from the pebbly bottom, and watched the trout keep-

ing themselves steady in the current with wavering fins. As he watched them they changed their positions by quick angles, only to hold steady in the fast water again. Nick watched them a long time.

He watched them holding themselves with their noses into the current, many trout in deep, fast moving water, slightly distorted as he watched far down through the glassy convex surface of the pool, its surface pushing and swelling smooth against the resistance of the log-driven piles of the bridge. At the bottom of the pool were the big trout. Nick did not see them at first. Then he saw them at the bottom of the pool, big trout looking to hold themselves on the gravel bottom in a varying mist of gravel and sand, raised in spurts by the current.

Nick looked down into the pool from the bridge. It was a hot day. A kingfisher flew up the stream. It was a long time since Nick had looked into a stream and seen trout. They were very satisfactory. As the shadow of the kingfisher moved up the stream, a big trout shot upstream in a long angle, only his shadow marking the angle, then lost his shadow as he came through the surface of the water, caught the sun, and then, as he went back into the stream under the surface, his shadow seemed to float down the stream with the current, unresisting, to his post under the bridge where he tightened facing up into the current.

Nick's heart tightened as the trout moved. He felt all the old feeling.

He turned and looked down the stream. It stretched away, pebbly-bottomed with shallows and big boulders and a deep pool as it curved away around the foot of a bluff.

Nick walked back up the ties to where his pack lay in the cinders beside the railway track. He was happy. He adjusted the pack harness around the bundle, pulling straps tight, slung the pack on his back, got his arms through the shoulder straps and took some of the pull off his shoulders by leaning his forehead against the wide band of the tump-line. Still, it was too heavy. It was much too heavy. He had his leather rod-case in his hand and leaning forward to keep the weight of the pack high on his shoulders he walked along the road that paralleled the railway track, leaving the burned town behind in the heat, and then turned off around a hill with a high, fire-scarred hill on either side onto a road that went back into the country. He walked along the road feeling the ache from the pull of the heavy pack. The road climbed steadily. It was hard work walking up-hill. His muscles ached and the day was hot, but Nick felt happy. He felt he had left everything behind, the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs. It was all back of him.

From the time he had gotten down off the train and the baggage man had thrown his pack out of the open car door things had been different. Seney was burned, the country was burned over and changed, but it did

not matter. It could not all be burned. He knew that. He hiked along the road, sweating in the sun, climbing to cross the range of hills that separated the railway from the pine plains.

The road ran on, dipping occasionally, but always climbing. Nick went on up. Finally the road after going parallel to the burnt hillside reached the top. Nick leaned back against a stump and slipped out of the pack harness. Ahead of him, as far as he could see, was the pine plain. The burned country stopped off at the left with the range of hills. On ahead islands of dark pine trees rose out of the plain. Far off to the left was the line of the river. Nick followed it with his eye and caught glints of the water in the sun.

There was nothing but the pine plain ahead of him, until the far blue hills that marked the Lake Superior height of land. He could hardly see them, faint and far away in the heat-light over the plain. If he looked too steadily they were gone. But if he only half-looked they were there, the far-off hills of the height of land.

Nick sat down against the charred stump and smoked a cigarette. His pack balanced on the top of the stump, harness holding ready, a hollow molded in it from his back. Nick sat smoking, looking out over the country. He did not need to get his map out. He knew where he was from the position of the river.

As he smoked, his legs stretched out in front of him, he noticed a grasshopper walk along the ground and up onto his woolen sock. The grasshopper was black.

As he had walked along the road, climbing, he had started many grasshoppers from the dust. They were all black. They were not the big grasshoppers with yellow and black or red and black wings whirring out from their black wing sheathing as they fly up. These were just ordinary hoppers, but all a sooty black in color. Nick had wondered about them as he walked, without really thinking about them. Now, as he watched the black hopper that was nibbling at the wool of his sock with its fourway lip, he realized that they had all turned black from living in the burned-over land. He realized that the fire must have come the year before, but the grasshoppers were all black now. He wondered how long they would stay that way.

Carefully he reached his hand down and took hold of the hopper by the wings. He turned him up, all his legs walking in the air, and looked at his jointed belly. Yes, it was black too, iridescent where the back and head were dusty.

"Go on, hopper," Nick said, speaking out loud for the first time. "Fly away somewhere."

He tossed the grasshopper up into the air and watched him sail away to a charcoal stump across the road.

Nick stood up. He leaned his back against the weight of his pack where it rested upright on the stump and got his arms through the shoulder straps. He stood with the pack on his back on the brow of

the hill looking out across the country, toward the distant river and then struck down the hillside away from the road. Underfoot the ground was good walking. Two hundred yards down the hillside the fire line stopped. Then it was sweet fern, growing ankle high, to walk through, and clumps of jack pines; a long undulating country with frequent rises and descents, sandy underfoot and the country alive again.

Nick kept his direction by the sun. He knew where he wanted to strike the river and he kept on through the pine plain, mounting small rises to see other rises ahead of him and sometimes from the top of a rise a great solid island of pines off to his right or his left. He broke off some sprigs of the heathery sweet fern, and put them under his pack straps. The chafing crushed it and he smelled it as he walked.

He was tired and very hot, walking across the uneven, shadeless pine plain. At any time he knew he could strike the river by turning off to his left. It could not be more than a mile away. But he kept on toward the north to hit the river as far upstream as he could go in one day's walking.

For some time as he walked Nick had been in sight of one of the big islands of pine standing out above the rolling high ground he was crossing. He dipped down and then as he came slowly up to the crest of the bridge he turned and made toward the pine trees.

There was no underbrush in the island of pine trees. The trunks of the trees went straight up or

slanted toward each other. The trunks were straight and brown without branches. The branches were high above. Some interlocked to make a solid shadow on the brown forest floor. Around the grove of trees was a bare space. It was brown and soft underfoot as Nick walked on it. This was the over-lapping of the pine needle floor, extending out beyond the width of the high branches. The trees had grown tall and the branches moved high, leaving in the sun this bare space they had once covered with shadow. Sharp at the edge of this extension of the forest floor commenced the sweet fern.

Nick slipped off his pack and lay down in the shade. He lay on his back and looked up into the pine trees. His neck and back and the small of his back rested as he stretched. The earth felt good against his back. He looked up at the sky, through the branches, and then shut his eyes. He opened them and looked up again. There was a wind high up in the branches. He shut his eyes again and went to sleep.

Nick woke stiff and cramped. The sun was nearly down. His pack was heavy and the straps painful as he lifted it on. He leaned over with the pack on and picked up the leather rod-case and started out from the pine trees across the sweet fern swale, toward the river. He knew it could not be more than a mile.

He came down a hillside covered with stumps into a meadow. At the edge of the meadow flowed the river. Nick was glad to get to the river. He walked upstream

through the meadow. His trousers were soaked with the dew as he walked. After the hot day, the dew had come quickly and heavily. The river made no sound. It was too fast and smooth. At the edge of the meadow, before he mounted to a piece of high ground to make camp, Nick looked down the river at the trout rising. They were rising to insects come from the swamp on the other side of the stream when the sun went down. The trout jumped out of water to take them. While Nick walked through the little stretch of meadow alongside the stream, trout had jumped high out of water. Now as he looked down the river, the insects must be settling on the surface, for the trout were feeding steadily all down the stream. As far down the long stretch as he could see, the trout were rising, making circles all down the surface of the water, as though it were starting to rain.

The ground rose, wooded and sandy, to overlook the meadow, the stretch of river and the swamp. Nick dropped his pack and rod-case and looked for a level piece of ground. He was very hungry and he wanted to make his camp before he cooked. Between two jack pines, the ground was quite level. He took the ax out of the pack and chopped out two projecting roots. That leveled a piece of ground large enough to sleep on. He smoothed out the sandy soil with his hand and pulled all the sweet fern bushes by their roots. His hands smelled good from the sweet fern. He smoothed the uprooted earth. He did not want

anything making lumps under the blankets. When he had the ground smooth, he spread his three blankets. One he folded double, next to the ground. The other two he spread on top.

With the ax he split off a bright slab of pine from one of the stumps and split it into pegs for the tent. He wanted them long and solid to hold in the ground. With the tent unpacked and spread on the ground, the pack, leaning against a jackpine, looked much smaller. Nick tied the rope that served the tent for a ridge-pole to the trunk of one of the pine trees and pulled the tent up off the ground with the other end of the rope and tied it to the other pine. The tent hung on the rope like a canvas blanket on a clothesline. Nick poked a pole he had cut up under the back peak of the canvas and then made it a tent by pegging out the sides. He pegged the sides out taut and drove the pegs deep, hitting them down into the ground with the flat of the ax until the rope loops were buried and the canvas was drum tight.

Across the open mouth of the tent Nick fixed cheesecloth to keep out mosquitoes. He crawled inside under the mosquito bar with various things from the pack to put at the head of the bed under the slant of the canvas. Inside the tent the light came through the brown canvas. It smelled pleasantly of canvas. Already there was something mysterious and homelike. Nick was happy as he crawled inside the tent. He had not been unhappy all day. This was different

though. Now things were done. There had been this to do. Now it was done. It had been a hard trip. He was very tired. That was done. He had made his camp. He was settled. Nothing could touch him. It was a good place to camp. He was there, in the good place. He was in his home where he had made it. Now he was hungry.

He came out, crawling under the cheesecloth. It was quite dark outside. It was lighter in the tent.

Nick went over to the pack and found, with his fingers, a long nail in a paper sack of nails, in the bottom of the pack. He drove it into the pine tree, holding it close and hitting it gently with the flat of the ax. He hung the pack up on the nail. All his supplies were in the pack. They were off the ground and sheltered now.

Nick was hungry. He did not believe he had ever been hungrier. He opened and emptied a can of pork and beans and a can of spaghetti into the frying pan.

"I've got a right to eat this kind of stuff, if I'm willing to carry it," Nick said. His voice sounded strange in the darkening woods. He did not speak again.

He started a fire with some chunks of pine he got with the ax from a stump. Over the fire he stuck a wire grill, pushing the four legs down into the ground with his boot. Nick put the frying pan on the grill over the flames. He was hungrier. The beans and spaghetti warmed. Nick stirred them and mixed them together.

They began to bubble, making little bubbles that rose with difficulty to the surface. There was a good smell. Nick got out a bottle of tomato catchup and cut four slices of bread. The little bubbles were coming faster now. Nick sat down beside the fire and lifted the frying pan off. He poured about half the contents out into the tin plate. It spread slowly on the plate. Nick knew it was too hot. He poured on some tomato catchup. He knew the beans and spaghetti were still too hot. He looked at the fire, then at the tent, he was not going to spoil it all by burning his tongue. For years he had never enjoyed fried bananas because he had never been able to wait for them to cool. His tongue was very sensitive. He was very hungry. Across the river in the swamp, in the almost dark, he saw a mist rising. He looked at the tent once more. All right. He took a full spoonful from the plate.

"Chrise," Nick said, "Geezus Chrise," he said happily.

He ate the whole plateful before he remembered the bread. Nick finished the second plateful with the bread, mopping the plate shiny. He had not eaten since a cup of coffee and a ham sandwich in the station restaurant at St. Ignace. It had been a very fine experience. He had been that hungry before, but had not been able to satisfy it. He could have made camp hours before if he had wanted to. There were plenty of good places to camp on the river. But this was good.

Nick tucked two big chips of pine under the grill.

The fire flared up. He had forgotten to get water for the coffee. Out of the pack he got a folding canvas bucket and walked down the hill, across the edge of the meadow, to the stream. The other bank was in the white mist. The grass was wet and cold as he knelt on the bank and dipped the canvas bucket into the stream. It bellied and pulled hard in the current. The water was ice cold. Nick rinsed the bucket and carried it full up to the camp. Up away from the stream it was not so cold.

Nick drove another big nail and hung up the bucket full of water. He dipped the coffee pot half full, put some more chips under the grill onto the fire and put the pot on. He could not remember which way he made coffee. He could remember an argument about it with Hopkins, but not which side he had taken. He decided to bring it to a boil. He remembered now that was Hopkins's way. He had once argued about everything with Hopkins. While he waited for the coffee to boil, he opened a small can of apricots. He liked to open cans. He emptied the can of apricots out into a tin cup. While he watched the coffee on the fire, he drank the juice syrup of the apricots, carefully at first to keep from spilling, then meditatively, sucking the apricots down. They were better than fresh apricots.

The coffee boiled as he watched. The lid came up and coffee and grounds ran down the side of the pot. Nick took it off the grill. It was a triumph for Hopkins. He put sugar in the empty apricot cup and

poured some of the coffee out to cool. It was too hot to pour and he used his hat to hold the handle of the coffee pot. He would not let it steep in the pot at all. Not the first cup. It should be straight Hopkins all the way. Hop deserved that. He was a very serious coffee drinker. He was the most serious man Nick had ever known. Not heavy, serious. That was a long time ago. Hopkins spoke without moving his lips. He had played polo. He made millions of dollars in Texas. He had borrowed carfare to go to Chicago, when the wire came that his first big well had come in. He could have wired for money. That would have been too slow. They called Hop's girl the Blonde Venus. Hop did not mind because she was not his real girl. Hopkins said very confidently that none of them would make fun of his real girl. He was right. Hopkins went away when the telegram came. That was on the Black River. It took eight days for the telegram to reach him. Hopkins gave away his .22 caliber Colt automatic pistol to Nick. He gave his camera to Bill. It was to remember him always by. They were all going fishing again next summer. The Hop Head was rich. He would get a yacht and they would all cruise along the north shore of Lake Superior. He was excited but serious. They said good-bye and all felt bad. It broke up the trip. They never saw Hopkins again. That was a long time ago on the Black River.

Nick drank the coffee, the coffee according to Hopkins. The coffee was bitter. Nick laughed. It made a good ending to the story. His mind was starting to

work. He knew he could choke it because he was tired enough. He spilled the coffee out of the pot and shook the grounds loose into the fire. He lit a cigarette and went inside the tent. He took off his shoes and trousers, sitting on the blankets, rolled the shoes up inside the trousers for a pillow and got in between the blankets.

Out through the front of the tent he watched the glow of the fire, when the night wind blew on it. It was a quiet night. The swamp was perfectly quiet. Nick stretched under the blanket comfortably. A mosquito hummed close to his ear. Nick sat up and lit a match. The mosquito was on the canvas, over his head. Nick moved the match quickly up to it. The mosquito made a satisfactory hiss in the flame. The match went out. Nick lay down again under the blanket. He turned on his side and shut his eyes. He was sleepy. He felt sleep coming. He curled up under the blanket and went to sleep.

Part II

In the morning the sun was up and the tent was starting to get hot. Nick crawled out under the mosquito netting stretched across the mouth of the tent, to look at the morning. The grass was wet on his hands as he came out. He held his trousers and his shoes in his hands. The sun was just up over the hill. There was the meadow, the river and the swamp. There were birch trees in the green of the swamp on the other side of the river.

The river was clear and smoothly fast in the early morning. Down about two hundred yards were three logs all the way across the stream. They made the water smooth and deep above them. As Nick watched, a mink crossed the river on the logs and went into the swamp. Nick was excited. He was excited by the early morning and the river. He was really too hurried to eat breakfast, but he knew he must. He built a little fire and put on the coffee pot.

While the water was heating in the pot he took an empty bottle and went down over the edge of the high ground to the meadow. The meadow was wet with dew and Nick wanted to catch grasshoppers for bait before the sun dried the grass. He found plenty of good grasshoppers. They were at the base of the grass stems. Sometimes they clung to a grass stem. They were cold and wet with the dew, and could not jump until the sun warmed them. Nick picked them up, taking only the medium-sized brown ones, and put them into the bottle. He turned over a log and just under the shelter of the edge were several hundred hoppers. It was a grasshopper lodging house. Nick put about fifty of the medium browns into the bottle. While he was picking up the hoppers the others warmed in the sun and commenced to hop away. They flew when they hopped. At first they made one flight and stayed stiff when they landed, as though they were dead.

Nick knew that by the time he was through with

breakfast they would be as lively as ever. Without dew in the grass it would take him all day to catch a bottle full of good grasshoppers and he would have to crush many of them, slamming at them with his hat. He washed his hands at the stream. He was excited to be near it. Then he walked up to the tent. The hoppers were already jumping stiffly in the grass. In the bottle, warmed by the sun, they were jumping in a mass. Nick put in a pine stick as a cork. It plugged the mouth of the bottle enough, so the hoppers could not get out and left plenty of air passage.

He had rolled the log back and knew he could get grasshoppers there every morning.

Nick laid the bottle full of jumping grasshoppers against a pine trunk. Rapidly he mixed some buckwheat flour with water and stirred it smooth, one cup of flour, one cup of water. He put a handful of coffee in the pot and dipped a lump of grease out of a can and slid it sputtering across the hot skillet. On the smoking skillet he poured smoothly the buckwheat batter. It spread like lava, the grease spitting sharply. Around the edges the buckwheat cake began to firm, then brown, then crisp. The surface was bubbling slowly to porousness. Nick pushed under the browned under surface with a fresh pine chip. He shook the skillet sideways and the cake was loose on the surface. I won't try and flop it, he thought. He slid the chip of clean wood all the way under the cake, and flopped it over onto its face. It sputtered in the pan.

When it was cooked Nick regreased the skillet. He used all the batter. It made another big flapjack and one smaller one.

Nick ate a big flapjack and a smaller one, covered with apple butter. He put apple butter on the third cake, folded it over twice, wrapped it in oiled paper and put it in his shirt pocket. He put the apple butter jar back in the pack and cut bread for two sandwiches.

In the pack he found a big onion. He sliced it in two and peeled the silky outer skin. Then he cut one half into slices and made onion sandwiches. He wrapped them in oiled paper and buttoned them in the other pocket of his khaki shirt. He turned the skillet upside down on the grill, drank the coffee, sweetened and yellow brown with the condensed milk in it, and tidied up the camp. It was a good camp.

Nick took his fly rod out of the leather rod-case, jointed it, and shoved the rod-case back into the tent. He put on the reel and threaded the line through the guides. He had to hold it from hand to hand, as he threaded it, or it would slip back through its own weight. It was a heavy, double tapered fly line. Nick had paid eight dollars for it a long time ago. It was made heavy to lift back in the air and come forward flat and heavy and straight to make it possible to cast a fly which has no weight. Nick opened the aluminum leader box. The leaders were coiled between the damp flannel pads. Nick had wet the pads at the water cooler on the train up to St. Ignace. In the damp pads the gut

leaders had softened and Nick unrolled one and tied it by a loop at the end to the heavy fly line. He fastened a hook on the end of the leader. It was a small hook; very thin and springy.

Nick took it from his hook book, sitting with the rod across his lap. He tested the knot and the spring of the rod by pulling the line taut. It was a good feeling. He was careful not to let the hook bite into his finger.

He started down to the stream, holding his rod, the bottle of grasshoppers hung from his neck by a thong tied in half hitches around the neck of the bottle. His landing net hung by a hook from his belt. Over his shoulder was a long flour sack tied at each corner into an ear. The cord went over his shoulder. The sack flapped against his legs.

Nick felt awkward and professionally happy with all his equipment hanging from him. The grasshopper bottle swung against his chest. In his shirt the breast pockets bulged against him with the lunch and his fly book.

He stepped into the stream. It was a shock. His trousers clung tight to his legs. His shoes felt the gravel. The water was a rising cold shock.

Rushing, the current sucked against his legs. Where he stepped in, the water was over his knees. He waded with the current. The gravel slid under his shoes. He looked down at the swirl of water below each leg and tipped up the bottle to get a grasshopper.

The first grasshopper gave a jump in the neck of the bottle and went out into the water. He was sucked under in the whirl by Nick's right leg and came to the surface a little way down stream. He floated rapidly, kicking. In a quick circle, breaking the smooth surface of the water, he disappeared. A trout had taken him.

Another hopper poked his face out of the bottle. His antennæ wavered. He was getting his front legs out of the bottle to jump. Nick took him by the head and held him while he threaded the slim hook under his chin, down through his thorax and into the last segments of his abdomen. The grasshopper took hold of the hook with his front feet, spitting tobacco juice on it. Nick dropped him into the water.

Holding the rod in his right hand he let out line against the pull of the grasshopper in the current. He stripped off line from the reel with his left hand and let it run free. He could see the hopper in the little waves of the current. It went out of sight.

There was a tug on the line. Nick pulled against the taut line. It was his first strike. Holding the now living rod across the current, he brought in the line with his left hand. The rod bent in jerks, the trout pumping against the current. Nick knew it was a small one. He lifted the rod straight up in the air. It bowed with the pull.

He saw the trout in the water jerking with his head and body against the shifting tangent of the line in the stream.

Nick took the line in his left hand and pulled the trout, thumping tiredly against the current, to the surface. His back was mottled the clear, water-over-gravel color, his side flashing in the sun. The rod under his right arm, Nick stooped, dipping his right hand into the current. He held the trout, never still, with his moist right hand, while he unhooked the barb from his mouth, then dropped him back into the stream.

He hung unsteadily in the current, then settled to the bottom beside a stone. Nick reached down his hand to touch him, his arm to the elbow under water. The trout was steady in the moving stream, resting on the gravel, beside a stone. As Nick's fingers touched him, touched his smooth, cool, underwater feeling he was gone, gone in a shadow across the bottom of the stream.

He's all right, Nick thought. He was only tired.

He had wet his hand before he touched the trout, so he would not disturb the delicate mucus that covered him. If a trout was touched with a dry hand, a white fungus attacked the unprotected spot. Years before when he had fished crowded streams, with fly fishermen ahead of him and behind him, Nick had again and again come on dead trout, furry with white fungus, drifted against a rock, or floating belly up in some pool. Nick did not like to fish with other men on the river. Unless they were of your party, they spoiled it.

He wallowed down the stream, above his knees in the current, through the fifty yards of shallow water above the pile of logs that crossed the stream. He did not rebait his hook and held it in his hand as he waded. He was certain he could catch small trout in the shallows, but he did not want them. There would be no big trout in the shallows this time of day.

Now the water deepened up his thighs sharply and coldly. Ahead was the smooth dammed-back flood of water above the logs. The water was smooth and dark; on the left, the lower edge of the meadow; on the right the swamp.

Nick leaned back against the current and took a hopper from the bottle. He threaded the hopper on the hook and spat on him for good luck. Then he pulled several yards of line from the reel and tossed the hopper out ahead onto the fast, dark water. It floated down towards the logs, then the weight of the line pulled the bait under the surface. Nick held the rod in his right hand, letting the line run out through his fingers.

There was a long tug. Nick struck and the rod came alive and dangerous, bent double, the line tightening, coming out of water, tightening, all in a heavy, dangerous, steady pull. Nick felt the moment when the leader would break if the strain increased and let the line go.

The reel ratcheted into a mechanical shriek as the line went out in a rush. Too fast. Nick could not

check it, the line rushing out, the reel note rising as the line ran out.

With the core of the reel showing, his heart feeling stopped with the excitement, leaning back against the current that mounted icily his thighs, Nick thumbed the reel hard with his left hand. It was awkward getting his thumb inside the fly reel frame.

As he put on pressure the line tightened into sudden hardness and beyond the logs a huge trout went high out of water. As he jumped, Nick lowered the tip of the rod. But he felt, as he dropped the tip to ease the strain, the moment when the strain was too great; the hardness too tight. Of course, the leader had broken. There was no mistaking the feeling when all spring left the line and it became dry and hard. Then it went slack.

His mouth dry, his heart down, Nick reeled in. He had never seen so big a trout. There was a heaviness, a power not to be held, and then the bulk of him, as he jumped. He looked as broad as a salmon.

Nick's hand was shaky. He reeled in slowly. The thrill had been too much. He felt, vaguely, a little sick, as though it would be better to sit down.

The leader had broken where the hook was tied to it. Nick took it in his hand. He thought of the trout somewhere on the bottom, holding himself steady over the gravel, far down below the light, under the logs, with the hook in his jaw. Nick knew the trout's teeth would cut through the snell of the hook. The hook

would imbed itself in his jaw. He'd bet the trout was angry. Anything that size would be angry. That was a trout. He had been solidly hooked. Solid as a rock. He felt like a rock, too, before he started off. By God, he was a big one. By God, he was the biggest one I ever heard of.

Nick climbed out onto the meadow and stood, water running down his trousers and out of his shoes, his shoes squlchy. He went over and sat on the logs. He did not want to rush his sensations any.

He wriggled his toes in the water, in his shoes, and got out a cigarette from his breast pocket. He lit it and tossed the match into the fast water below the logs. A tiny trout rose at the match, as it swung around in the fast current. Nick laughed. He would finish the cigarette.

He sat on the logs, smoking, drying in the sun, the sun warm on his back, the river shallow ahead entering the woods, curving into the woods, shallows, light glittering, big water-smooth rocks, cedars along the bank and white birches, the logs warm in the sun, smooth to sit on, without bark, gray to the touch; slowly the feeling of disappointment left him. It went away slowly, the feeling of disappointment that came sharply after the thrill that made his shoulders ache. It was all right now. His rod lying out on the logs, Nick tied a new hook on the leader, pulling the gut tight until it grimped into itself in a hard knot.

He baited up, then picked up the rod and walked to

the far end of the logs to get into the water, where it was not too deep. Under and beyond the logs was a deep pool. Nick walked around the shallow shelf near the swamp shore until he came out on the shallow bed of the stream.

On the left, where the meadow ended and the woods began, a great elm tree was uprooted. Gone over in a storm, it lay back into the woods, its roots clotted with dirt, grass growing in them, rising a solid bank beside the stream. The river cut to the edge of the uprooted tree. From where Nick stood he could see deep channels, like ruts, cut in the shallow bed of the stream by the flow of the current. Pebbly where he stood and pebbly and full of boulders beyond; where it curved near the tree roots, the bed of the stream was marly and between the ruts of deep water green weed fronds swung in the current.

Nick swung the rod back over his shoulder and forward, and the line, curving forward, laid the grasshopper down on one of the deep channels in the weeds. A trout struck and Nick hooked him.

Holding the rod far out toward the uprooted tree and sloshing backward in the current, Nick worked the trout, plunging, the rod bending alive, out of the danger of the weeds into the open river. Holding the rod, pumping alive against the current, Nick brought the trout in. He rushed, but always came, the spring of the rod yielding to the rushes, sometimes jerking under water, but always bringing him in. Nick eased

downstream with the rushes. The rod above his head he led the trout over the net, then lifted.

The trout hung heavy in the net, mottled trout back and silver sides in the meshes. Nick unhooked him; heavy sides, good to hold, big undershot jaw, and slipped him, heaving and big sliding, into the long sack that hung from his shoulders in the water.

Nick spread the mouth of the sack against the current and it filled, heavy with water. He held it up, the bottom in the stream, and the water poured out through the sides. Inside at the bottom was the big trout, alive in the water.

Nick moved downstream. The sack out ahead of him sunk heavy in the water, pulling from his shoulders.

It was getting hot, the sun hot on the back of his neck.

Nick had one good trout. He did not care about getting many trout. Now the stream was shallow and wide. There were trees along both banks. The trees of the left bank made short shadows on the current in the forenoon sun. Nick knew there were trout in each shadow. In the afternoon, after the sun had crossed toward the hills, the trout would be in the cool shadows on the other side of the stream.

The very biggest ones would lie up close to the bank. You could always pick them up there on the Black. When the sun was down they all moved out into the current. Just when the sun made the water

blinding in the glare before it went down, you were liable to strike a big trout anywhere in the current. It was almost impossible to fish then, the surface of the water was blinding as a mirror in the sun. Of course, you could fish upstream, but in a stream like the Black, or this, you had to wallow against the current and in a deep place, the water piled up on you. It was no fun to fish upstream with this much current.

Nick moved along through the shallow stretch watching the banks for deep holes. A beech tree grew close beside the river, so that the branches hung down into the water. The stream went back in under the leaves. There were always trout in a place like that.

Nick did not care about fishing that hole. He was sure he would get hooked in the branches.

It looked deep though. He dropped the grasshopper so the current took it under water, back in under the overhanging branch. The line pulled hard and Nick struck. The trout threshed heavily, half out of water in the leaves and branches. The line was caught. Nick pulled hard and the trout was off. He reeled in and holding the hook in his hand, walked down the stream.

Ahead, close to the left bank, was a big log. Nick saw it was hollow; pointing up river the current entered it smoothly, only a little ripple spread each side of the log. The water was deepening. The top of the hollow log was gray and dry. It was partly in the shadow.

Nick took the cork out of the grasshopper bottle and a hopper clung to it. He picked him off, hooked him and tossed him out. He held the rod far out so that the hopper on the water moved into the current flowing into the hollow log. Nick lowered the rod and the hopper floated in. There was a heavy strike. Nick swung the rod against the pull. It felt as though he were hooked into the log itself, except for the live feeling.

He tried to force the fish out into the current. It came, heavily.

The line went slack and Nick thought the trout was gone. Then he saw him, very near, in the current, shaking his head, trying to get the hook out. His mouth was clamped shut. He was fighting the hook in the clear flowing current.

Looping in the line with his left hand, Nick swung the rod to make the line taut and tried to lead the trout toward the net, but he was gone, out of sight, the line pumping. Nick fought him against the current, letting him thump in the water against the spring of the rod. He shifted the rod to his left hand, worked the trout upstream, holding his weight, fighting on the rod, and then let him down into the net. He lifted him clear of the water, a heavy half circle in the net, the net dripping, unhooked him and slid him into the sack.

He spread the mouth of the sack and looked down in at the two big trout alive in the water.

Through the deepening water, Nick waded over to the hollow log. He took the sack off, over his head, the trout flopping as it came out of water, and hung it so the trout were deep in the water. Then he pulled himself up on the log and sat, the water from his trouser and boots running down into the stream. He laid his rod down, moved along to the shady end of the log and took the sandwiches out of his pocket. He dipped the sandwiches in the cold water. The current carried away the crumbs. He ate the sandwiches and dipped his hat full of water to drink, the water running out through his hat just ahead of his drinking.

It was cool in the shade, sitting on the log. He took a cigarette out and struck a match to light it. The match sunk into the gray wood, making a tiny furrow. Nick leaned over the side of the log, found a hard place and lit the match. He sat smoking and watching the river.

Ahead the river narrowed and went into a swamp. The river became smooth and deep and the swamp looked solid with cedar trees, their trunks close together, their branches solid. It would not be possible to walk through a swamp like that. The branches grew so low. You would have to keep almost level with the ground to move at all. You could not crash through the branches. That must be why the animals that lived in swamps were built the way they were, Nick thought.

He wished he had brought something to read. He

felt like reading. He did not feel like going on into the swamp. He looked down the river. A big cedar slanted all the way across the stream. Beyond that the river went into the swamp.

Nick did not want to go in there now. He felt a reaction against deep wading with the water deepening up under his armpits, to hook big trout in places impossible to land them. In the swamp the banks were bare, the big cedars came together overhead, the sun did not come through, except in patches; in the fast deep water, in the half light, the fishing would be tragic. In the swamp fishing was a tragic adventure. Nick did not want it. He did not want to go down the stream any further today.

He took out his knife, opened it and stuck it in the log. Then he pulled up the sack, reached into it and brought out one of the trout. Holding him near the tail, hard to hold, alive, in his hand, he whacked him against the log. The trout quivered, rigid. Nick laid him on the log in the shade and broke the neck of the other fish the same way. He laid them side by side on the log. They were fine trout.

Nick cleaned them, slitting them from the vent to the tip of the jaw. All the insides and the gills and tongue came out in one piece. They were both males; long gray-white strips of milt, smooth and clean. All the insides clean and compact, coming out all together. Nick tossed the offal ashore for the minks to find.

He washed the trout in the stream. When he held

them back up in the water they looked like live fish. Their color was not gone yet. He washed his hands and dried them on the log. Then he laid the trout on the sack spread out on the log, rolled them up in it, tied the bundle and put it in the landing net. His knife was still standing, blade stuck in the log. He cleaned it on the wood and put it in his pocket.

Nick stood up on the log, holding his rod, the landing net hanging heavy, then stepped into the water and splashed ashore. He climbed the bank and cut up into the woods, toward the high ground. He was going back to camp. He looked back. The river just showed through the trees. There were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp.

A FATAL SUCCESS

by Henry van Dyke

BEEKMAN DE PEYSTER WAS PROBABLY THE MOST passionate and triumphant fisherman in the Petrine Club. He angled with the same dash and confidence that he threw into his operations in the stock-market. He was sure to be the first man to get his flies on the water at the opening of the season. And when we came together for our fall meeting, to compare notes of our wanderings on various streams and make up the fish-stories for the year, Beekman was almost always "high hook." We expected, as a matter of course, to hear that he had taken the most and the largest fish.

It was so with everything that he undertook. He was a masterful man. If there was an unusually large trout in a river, Beekman knew about it before any one else, and got there first, and came home with the fish. It did not make him unduly proud, because there was nothing uncommon about it. It was his habit to succeed, and all the rest of us were hardened to it.

When he married Cornelia Cochrane, we were consoled for our partial loss by the apparent fitness and brilliancy of the match. If Beekman was a masterful man, Cornelia was certainly what you might call a mistressful woman. She had been the head of her house since she was eighteen years old. She carried her good looks like the family plate; and when she came into the breakfast-room and said good-morning, it was with an air as if she presented every one with a check for a thousand dollars. Her tastes were accepted as judgments, and her preferences had the force of laws. Wherever she wanted to go in the summer-time, there the finger of household destiny pointed. At Newport, at Bar Harbour, at Lenox, at Southampton, she made a record. When she was joined in holy wedlock to Beekman De Peyster, her father and mother heaved a sigh of satisfaction, and settled down for a quiet vacation in Cherry Valley.

It was in the second summer after the wedding that Beekman admitted to a few of his ancient Petrine cronies, in moments of confidence (unjustifiable, but natural), that his wife had one fault.

"It is not exactly a fault," he said, "not a positive fault, you know. It is just a kind of a defect, due to her education, of course. In everything else she's magnificent. But she doesn't care for fishing. She says it's stupid,—can't see why any one should like the woods,—calls camping out the lunatic's diversion. It's rather awkward for a man with my habits to have his wife

take such a view. But it can be changed by training. I intend to educate her and convert her. I shall make an angler of her yet."

And so he did.

The new education was begun in the Adirondacks, and the first lesson was given at Paul Smith's. It was a complete failure.

Beekman persuaded her to come out with him for a day on Meacham River, and promised to convince her of the charm of angling. She wore a new gown, fawn-colour and violet, with a picture-hat, very taking. But the Meacham River trout was shy that day; not even Beekman could induce him to rise to the fly. What the trout lacked in confidence the mosquitoes more than made up. Mrs. De Peyster came home much sunburned, and expressed a highly unfavourable opinion of fishing as an amusement and of Meacham River as a resort.

"The nice people don't come to the Adirondacks to fish," said she; "they come to talk about the fishing twenty years ago. Besides, what do you want to catch that trout for? If you do, the other men will say you bought it, and the hotel will have to put in another for the rest of the season."

The following year Beekman tried Moosehead Lake. Here he found an atmosphere more favourable to his plan of education. There were a good many people who really fished, and short expeditions in the woods were quite fashionable. Cornelia had a camp-

ing-costume of the most approved style made by Dewlap on Fifth Avenue,—pearl-gray with linings of rose-silk,—and consented to go with her husband on a trip up Moose River. They pitched their tent the first evening at the mouth of Misery Stream, and a storm came on. The rain sifted through the canvas in a fine spray, and Mrs. De Peyster sat up all night in a waterproof cloak, holding an umbrella. The next day they were back at the hotel in time for lunch.

"It was horrid," she told her most intimate friend, "perfectly horrid. The idea of sleeping in a shower-bath, and eating your breakfast from a tin plate, just for sake of catching a few silly fish! Why not send your guides out to get them for you?"

But, in spite of this profession of obstinate heresy, Beekman observed with secret joy that there were signs, before the end of the season, that Cornelia was drifting a little, a very little but still perceptibly, in the direction of a change of heart. She began to take an interest, as the big trout came along in September, in the reports of the catches made by the different anglers. She would saunter out with the other people to the corner of the porch to see the fish weighed and spread out on the grass. Several times she went with Beekman in the canoe to Hardscrabble Point, and showed distinct evidences of pleasure when he caught large trout. The last day of the season, when he returned from a successful expedition to Roach River and Lily Bay, she inquired with some particularity

about the results of his sport; and in the evening, as the company sat before the great open fire in the hall of the hotel, she was heard to use this information with considerable skill in putting down Mrs. Minot Peabody of Boston, who was recounting the details of her husband's catch at Spencer Pond. Cornelia was not a person to be contented with the back seat, even in fish-stories.

When Beekman observed these indications he was much encouraged, and resolved to push his educational experiment briskly forward to his customary goal of success.

"Some things can be done, as well as others," he said in his masterful way, as three of us were walking home together after the autumnal dinner of the Petrine Club, which he always attended as a graduate member. "A real fisherman never gives up. I told you I'd make an angler out of my wife; and so I will. It has been rather difficult. She is 'dour' in rising. But she's beginning to take notice of the fly now. Give me another season, and I'll have her landed."

Good old Beekman! Little did he think— But I must not interrupt the story with moral reflections.

The preparations that he made for his final effort at conversion were thorough and prudent. He had a private interview with Dewlap in regard to the construction of a practical fishing-costume for a lady, which resulted in something more reasonable and workmanlike than had ever been turned out by that

famous artist. He ordered from Hook & Catchett a lady's angling-outfit of the most enticing description,—a split-bamboo rod, light as a girl's wish, and strong as a matron's will; an oxidized silver reel, with a monogram on one side, and a sapphire set in the handle for good luck; a book of flies, of all sizes and colours, with the correct names inscribed in gilt letters on each page. He surrounded his favourite sport with an aureole of elegance and beauty. And then he took Cornelia in September to the Upper Dam at Rangeley.

She went reluctant. She arrived disgusted. She stayed incredulous. She returned— Wait a bit, and you shall hear how she returned.

The Upper Dam at Rangeley is the place, of all others in the world, where the lunacy of angling may be seen in its incurable stage. There is a cosy little inn, called a camp, at the foot of a big lake. In front of the inn is a huge dam of gray stone, over which the river plunges into a great oval pool, where the trout assemble in the early fall to perpetuate their race. From the tenth of September to the thirtieth, there is not an hour of the day or night when there are no boats floating on that pool, and no anglers trailing the fly across its waters. Before the late fishermen are ready to come in at midnight, the early fishermen may be seen creeping down to the shore with lanterns in order to begin before cock-crow. The number of fish taken is not large,—perhaps five or six for the whole company on an average day,—but the size is sometimes

enormous,—nothing under three pounds is counted,—and they pervade thought and conversation at the Upper Dam to the exclusion of every other subject. There is no driving, no dancing, no golf, no tennis. There is nothing to do but fish or die.

At first, Cornelia thought she would choose the latter alternative. But a remark of that skilful and morose old angler, McTurk, which she overheard on the verandah after supper, changed her mind.

"Women have no sporting instinct," said he. "They only fish because they see men doing it. They are imitative animals."

That same night she told Beekman, in the subdued tone which the architectural construction of the house imposes upon all confidential communications in the bedrooms, but with resolution in every accent, that she proposed to go fishing with him on the morrow.

"But not on that pool, right in front of the house, you understand. There must be some other place, out on the lake, where we can fish for three or four days, until I get the trick of this wobbly rod. Then I'll show that old bear, McTurk, what kind of an animal woman is."

Beekman was simply delighted. Five days of diligent practice at the mouth of Mill Brook brought his pupil to the point where he pronounced her safe.

"Of course," he said patronizingly, "you haven't learned all about it yet. That will take years. But you can get your fly out thirty feet, and you can keep the

tip of your rod up. If you do that, the trout will hook himself, in rapid water, eight times out of ten. For playing him, if you follow my directions, you'll be all right. We will try the pool to-night, and hope for a medium-sized fish."

Cornelia said nothing, but smiled and nodded. She had her own thoughts.

At about nine o'clock Saturday night, they anchored their boat on the edge of the shoal where the big eddy swings around, put out the lantern and began to fish. Beekman sat in the bow of the boat, with his rod over the left side; Cornelia in the stern, with her rod over the right side. The night was cloudy and very black. Each of them had put on the largest possible fly, one a "Bee-Pond" and the other a "Dragon;" but even these were invisible. They measured out the right length of line, and let the flies drift back until they hung over the shoal, in the curly water where the two currents meet.

There were three other boats to the left of them. McTurk was their only neighbour in the darkness on the right. Once they heard him swearing softly to himself, and knew that he had hooked and lost a fish.

Away down at the tail of the pool, dimly visible through the gloom, the furtive fisherman, Parsons, had anchored his boat. No noise ever came from that craft. If he wished to change his position, he did not pull up the anchor and let it down again with a bump. He simply lengthened or shortened his anchor rope.

There was no click of the reel when he played a fish. He drew in and paid out the line through the rings by hand, without a sound. What he thought when a fish got away, no one knew, for he never said it. He concealed his angling as if it had been a conspiracy. Twice that night they heard a faint splash in the water near his boat, and twice they saw him put his arm over the side in the darkness and bring it back again very quietly.

"That's the second fish for Parsons," whispered Beekman, "what a secretive old Fortunatus he is! He knows more about fishing than any man on the pool, and talks less."

Cornelia did not answer. Her thoughts were all on the tip of her own rod. About eleven o'clock a fine, drizzling rain set in. The fishing was very slack. All the other boats gave it up in despair; but Cornelia said she wanted to stay out a little longer, they might as well finish up the week.

At precisely fifty minutes past eleven, Beekman reeled up his line, and remarked with firmness that the holy Sabbath day was almost at hand and they ought to go in.

"Not till I've landed this trout," said Cornelia.

"What? A trout! Have you got one?"

"Certainly; I've had him on for at least fifteen minutes. I'm playing him Mr. Parsons' way. You might as well light the lantern and get the net ready; he's coming in towards the boat now."

Beekman broke three matches before he made the lantern burn; and when he held it up over the gunwale, there was the trout sure enough, gleaming ghostly pale in the dark water, close to the boat, and quite tired out. He slipped the net over the fish and drew it in,—a monster.

"I'll carry that trout, if you please," said Cornelia, as they stepped out of the boat; and she walked into the camp, on the last stroke of midnight, with the fish in her hand, and quietly asked for the steelyard.

Eight pounds and fourteen ounces,—that was the weight. Everybody was amazed. It was the "best fish" of the year. Cornelia showed no sign of exultation, until just as John was carrying the trout to the ice-house. Then she flashed out:—

"Quite a fair imitation, Mr. McTurk,—isn't it?"

Now McTurk's best record for the last fifteen years was seven pounds and twelve ounces.

So far as McTurk is concerned, this is the end of the story. But not for the De Peysters. I wish it were. Beekman went to sleep that night with a contented spirit. He felt that his experiment in education had been a success. He had made his wife an angler.

He had indeed, and to an extent which he little suspected. That Upper Dam trout was to her like the first taste of blood to the tiger. It seemed to change, at once, not so much her character as the direction of her vital energy. She yielded to the lunacy of angling, not by slow degrees, (as first a transient delusion, then

a fixed idea, then a chronic infirmity, finally a mild insanity,) but by a sudden plunge into the most violent mania. So far from being ready to die at Upper Dam, her desire now was to live there—and to live solely for the sake of fishing—as long as the season was open.

There were two hundred and forty hours left to midnight on the thirtieth of September. At least two hundred of these she spent on the pool; and when Beekman was too exhausted to manage the boat and the net and the lantern for her, she engaged a trustworthy guide to take Beekman's place while he slept. At the end of the last day her score was twenty-three, with an average of five pounds and a quarter. His score was nine, with an average of four pounds. He had succeeded far beyond his wildest hopes.

The next year his success became even more astonishing. They went to the Titan Club in Canada. The ugliest and most inaccessible sheet of water in that territory is Lake Pharaoh. But it is famous for the extraordinary fishing at a certain spot near the outlet, where there is just room enough for one canoe. They camped on Lake Pharaoh for six weeks, by Mrs. De Peyster's command; and her canoe was always the first to reach the fishing-ground in the morning, and the last to leave it in the evening.

Some one asked him, when he returned to the city, whether he had good luck.

"Quite fair," he tossed off in a careless way; "we took over three hundred pounds."

"To your own rod?" asked the inquirer, in admiration.

"No—o—o," said Beekman, "there were two of us."

There were two of them, also, the following year, when they joined the Natasheebo Salmon Club and fished that celebrated river in Labrador. The custom of drawing lots every night for the water that each member was to angle over the next day, seemed to be especially designed to fit the situation. Mrs. De Peyster could fish her own pool and her husband's too. The result of that year's fishing was something phenomenal. She had a score that made a paragraph in the newspapers and called out editorial comment. One editor was so inadequate to the situation as to entitle the article in which he described her triumph "The Equivalence of Woman." It was well-meant, but she was not at all pleased with it.

She was now not merely an angler, but a "record" angler of the most virulent type. Wherever they went, she wanted, and she got, the pick of the water. She seemed to be equally at home on all kinds of streams, large and small. She would pursue the little mountain-brook trout in the early spring, and the Labrador salmon in July, and the huge speckled trout of the northern lakes in September, with the same avidity and resolution. All that she cared for was to get the best and the most of the fishing at each place where she angled. This she always did.

And Beekman,—well, for him there were no more

long separations from the partner of his life while he went off to fish some favourite stream. There were no more home-comings after a good day's sport to find her clad in cool and dainty raiment on the verandah, ready to welcome him with friendly badinage. There was not even any casting of the fly around Hardscrabble Point while she sat in the canoe reading a novel, looking up with mild and pleasant interest when he caught a larger fish than usual, as an older and wiser person looks at a child playing some innocent game. Those days of a divided interest between man and wife were gone. She was now fully converted, and more. Beekman and Cornelia were one; and she was the one.

The last time I saw the De Peysters he was following her along the Beaverkill, carrying a landing-net and a basket, but no rod. She paused for a moment to exchange greetings, and then strode on down the stream. He lingered for a few minutes longer to light a pipe.

"Well, old man," I said, "you certainly have succeeded in making an angler of Mrs. De Peyster."

"Yes, indeed," he answered,—"haven't I?" Then he continued, after a few thoughtful puffs of smoke, "Do you know, I'm not quite so sure as I used to be that fishing is the best of all sports. I sometimes think of giving it up and going in for croquet."

PLAIN FISHING

by Frank R. Stockton

"WELL, SIR," SAID OLD PETER, AS HE CAME OUT ON THE porch with his pipe, "so you come here to go fishin'?"

Peter Gruse was the owner of the farmhouse where I had arrived that day, just before supper-time. He was a short, strong-built old man, with a pair of pretty daughters, and little gold rings in his ears. Two things distinguished him from the farmers in the country round about: one was the rings in his ears, and the other was the large and comfortable house in which he kept his pretty daughters. The other farmers in that region had fine large barns for their cattle and horses, but very poor houses for their daughters. Old Peter's earrings were indirectly connected with his house. He had not always lived among those mountains. He had been on the sea, where his ears were decorated, and he had travelled a good deal on land, where he had ornamented his mind with many ideas which were not in general use in the part of his State in which he was

born. This house stood a little back from the highroad, and if a traveller wished to be entertained, Peter was generally willing to take him in, provided he had left his wife and family at home. The old man himself had no objection to wives and children, but his two pretty daughters had.

These two young women had waited on their father and myself at supper-time, one continually bringing hot griddle cakes, and the other giving me every opportunity to test the relative merits of the seven different kinds of preserves, which, in little glass plates, covered the unoccupied spaces on the table-cloth. The latter, when she found that there was no further possible way of serving us, presumed to sit down at the corner of the table and begin her supper. But in spite of this apparent humility, which was only a custom of the country, there was that in the general air of the pretty daughters which left no doubt in the mind of the intelligent observer that they stood at the wheel in that house. There was a son of fourteen, who sat at table with us, but he did not appear to count as a member of the family.

"Yes," I answered, "I understood that there was good fishing hereabouts, and, at any rate, I should like to spend a few days among these hills and mountains."

"Well," said Peter, "there's trout in some of our streams, though not as many as there used to be, and there's hills a plenty, and mountains too, if you choose to walk fur enough. They're a good deal furder off

than they look. What did you bring with you to fish with?"

"Nothing at all," I answered. "I was told in the town that you were a great fisherman, and that you could let me have all the tackle I would need."

"Upon my word," said old Peter, resting his pipe-hand on his knee and looking steadfastly at me, "you're the queerest fisherman I've seed yet. Nigh every year, some two or three of 'em stop here in the fishin' season, and there was never a man who didn't bring his jinted pole, and his reels, and his lines, and his hooks, and his dry-good flies, and his whisky-flask with a long strap to it. Now, if you want all these things, I haven't got 'em."

"Whatever you use yourself will suit me," I answered.

"All right, then," said he. "I'll do the best I can for you in the mornin'. But it's plain enough to me that you're not a game fisherman, or you wouldn't come here without your tools."

To this remark I made answer to the effect, that though I was very fond of fishing, my pleasure in it did not depend upon the possession of all the appliances of professional sport.

"Perhaps you think," said the old man, "from the way I spoke, that I don't believe them fellers with the jinted poles can ketch fish, but that ain't so. That old story about the little boy with the pin-hook who ketched all the fish, while the gentleman with the

modern improvements, who stood alongside of him, kep' throwin' out his beautiful flies and never got nothin', is a pure lie. The fancy chaps, who must have ev'rythin' jist so, gen'rally gits fish. But for all that, I don't like their way of fishin', and I take no stock in it myself. I've been fishin', on and off, ever since I was a little boy, and I've caught nigh every kind there is, from the big jew-fish and cavalyoes down South, to the trout and minnies round about here. But when I ketch a fish, the first thing I do is to try to git him on the hook, and the next thing is to git him out of the water jist as soon as I kin. I don't put in no time worryin' him. There's only two animals in the world that likes to worry smaller creeturs a good while afore they kill 'em; one is the cat, and the other is what they call the game fisherman. This kind of a feller never goes after no fish that don't mind being ketched. He goes fur them kinds that loves their home in the water and hates most to leave it, and he makes it jist as hard fur 'em as he kin. What the game fisher likes is the smallest kind of a hook, the thinnest line, and a fish that it takes a good while to weaken. The longer the weak'nin' business kin be spun out, the more the sport. The idee is to let the fish think there's a chance fur him to git away. That's jist like the cat with her mouse. She lets the little creetur hop off, but the minnit he gits fur enough down, she jabs on him with her claws, and then, if there's any game left in him, she lets him try agen. Of course, the game fisher could have a strong

line and a stout pole and git his fish in a good sight quicker, if he wanted to, but that wouldn't be sport. He couldn't give him the butt and spin him out, and reel him in, and let him jump and run till his pluck is clean worn out. Now, I likes to git my fish ashore with all the pluck in 'em. It makes 'em taste better. And as fur fun, I'll be bound I've had jist as much of that, and more, too, than most of these fellers who are so dreadful anxious to have everythin' jist right, and think they can't go fishin' till they've spent enough money to buy a suit of Sunday clothes. As a gen'ral rule they're a solemn lot, and work pretty hard at their fun. When I work I want to be paid fur it, and when I go in fur fun I want to take it easy and comfortable. Now I wouldn't say so much agen these fellers," said old Peter, as he arose and put his empty pipe on a little shelf under the porch-roof, "if it wasn't for one thing, and that is, that they think that their kind of fishin' is the only kind worth considerin'. The way they look down upon plain Christian fishin' is enough to rile a hitchin'-post. I don't want to say nothin' agen no man's way of attendin' to his own affairs, whether it's kitchen gardenin', or whether it's fishin', if he says nothin' agen my way; but when he looks down on me, and grins me, I want to haul myself up, and grin him, if I kin. And in this case, I kin. I s'pose the house-cat and the cat-fisher (by which I don't mean the man who fishes for cat-fish) was both made as they is, and they can't help it; but that don't

give 'em no right to put on airs before other bein's, who gits their meat with a square kill. Good night. And sence I've talked so much about it, I've a mind to go fishin' with you to-morrow myself."

The next morning found old Peter of the same mind, and after breakfast he proceeded to fit me out for a day of what he called "plain Christian trout-fishin'." He gave me a reed rod, about nine feet long, light, strong, and nicely balanced. The tackle he produced was not of the fancy order, but his lines were of fine strong linen, and his hooks were of good shape, clean and sharp, and snooded to the lines with a neatness that indicated the hand of a man who had been where he learned to wear little gold rings in his ears.

"Here are some of these feather insects," he said, "which you kin take along if you like." And he handed me a paper containing a few artificial flies. "They're pretty nat'ral," he said, "and the hooks is good. A man who come here fishin' gave 'em to me, but I shan't want 'em to-day. At this time of year grasshoppers is the best bait in the kind of place where we're goin' to fish. The stream, after it comes down from the mountain, runs through half a mile of medder land before it strikes into the woods agen. A grasshopper is a little creetur that's got as much conceit as if his jinted legs was fish-poles, and he thinks he kin jump over this narrer run of water whenever he pleases; but he don't always do it, and them of him that don't git snapped up by the trout that lie along

the banks in the medder is floated along into the woods, where there's always fish enough to come to the second table."

Having got me ready, Peter took his own particular pole, which he assured me he had used for eleven years, and hooking on his left arm a good-sized basket, which his elder pretty daughter had packed with cold meat, bread, butter, and preserves, we started forth for a three-mile walk to the fishing-ground. The day was a favourable one for our purpose, the sky being sometimes overclouded, which was good for fishing, and also for walking on a highroad; and sometimes bright, which was good for effects of mountain scenery. Not far from the spot where old Peter proposed to begin our sport, a small frame-house stood by the roadside, and here the old man halted and entered the open door without knocking or giving so much as a premonitory stamp. I followed, imitating my companion in leaving my pole outside, which appeared to be the only ceremony that the etiquette of those parts required of visitors. In the room we entered, a small man in his shirt sleeves sat mending a basket handle. He nodded to Peter, and Peter nodded to him.

"We've come up a-fishin'," said the old man. "Kin your boys give us some grasshoppers?"

"I don't know that they've got any ready ketched," said he, "for I reckon I used what they had this mornin'. But they kin git you some. Here, Dan, you and Sile go and ketch Mister Gruse and this young

man some grasshoppers. Take that mustard-box, and see that you git it full."

Peter and I now took seats, and the conversation began about a black cow which Peter had to sell, and which the other was willing to buy if the old man would trade for sheep, which animals, however, the basket-mender did not appear just at that time to have in his possession. As I was not very much interested in this subject, I walked to the back door and watched two small boys in scanty shirts and trousers and ragged straw hats, who were darting about in the grass catching grasshoppers, of which insects, judging by the frequent pounces of the boys, there seemed a plentiful supply.

"Got it full?" said their father when the boys came in.

"Crammed," said Dan.

Old Peter took the little can, pressed the top firmly on, put it in his coat-tail pocket, and rose to go. "You'd better think about that cow, Barney," said he. He said nothing to the boys about the box of bait; but I could not let them catch grasshoppers for us for nothing, and I took a dime from my pocket, and gave it to Dan. Dan grinned, and Sile looked sheepishly happy, and at the sight of the piece of silver an expression of interest came over the face of the father. "Wait a minute," said he, and he went into a little room that seemed to be a kitchen. Returning, he brought with him a small string of trout. "Do you

want to buy some fish?" he said. "These is nice fresh ones. I ketched 'em this mornin'."

To offer to sell fish to a man who is just about to go out to catch them for himself might, in most cases, be considered an insult, but it was quite evident that nothing of the kind was intended by Barney. He probably thought that if I bought grasshoppers, I might buy fish. "You kin have 'em for a quarter," he said.

It was derogatory to my pride to buy fish at such a moment, but the man looked very poor, and there was a shade of anxiety on his face which touched me. Old Peter stood by without saying a word. "It might be well," I said, turning to him, "to buy these fish, for we may not catch enough for supper."

"Such things do happen," said the old man.

"Well," said I, "if we have these we will feel safe in any case." And I took the fish and gave the man a quarter. It was not, perhaps, a professional act, but the trout were well worth the money, and I felt that I was doing a deed of charity.

Old Peter and I now took our rods, and crossed the road into an enclosed lot, and thence into a wide stretch of grassland, bounded by hills in front of us and to the right, while a thick forest lay to the left. We had walked but a short distance, when Peter said: "I'll go down into the woods, and try my luck there, and you'd better go along upstream, about a quarter of a mile, to where it's rocky. P'raps you ain't used

to fishin' in the woods, and you might git your line cotched. You'll find the trout'll bite in the rough water."

"Where is the stream?" I asked.

"This is it," he said, pointing to a little brook, which was scarcely too wide for me to step across, "and there's fish right here, but they're hard to ketch, fur they git plenty of good livin', and are mighty sassy about their eatin'. But you kin ketch 'em up there."

Old Peter now went down toward the woods, while I walked up the little stream. I had seen trout-brooks before, but never one so diminutive as this. However, when I came nearer to the point where the stream issued from between two of the foot-hills of the mountains, which lifted their forest-covered heights in the distance, I found it wider and shallower, breaking over its rocky bottom in sparkling little cascades.

Fishing in such a jolly little stream, surrounded by this mountain scenery, and with the privileges of the beautiful situation all to myself, would have been a joy to me if I had had never a bite. But no such ill-luck befell me. Peter had given me the can of grasshoppers after putting half of them into his own bait-box, and these I used with much success. It was grasshopper season, and the trout were evidently on the lookout for them. I fished in the ripples under the little waterfalls; and every now and then I drew out a lively trout. Most of these were of moderate size, and some of them

might have been called small. The large ones probably fancied the forest shades, where old Peter went. But all I caught were fit for the table, and I was very well satisfied with the result of my sport.

About an hour after noon I began to feel hungry, and thought it time to look up the old man, who had the lunch-basket. I walked down the bank of the brook, and some time before I reached the woods I came to a place where it expanded to a width of about ten feet. The water here was very clear, and the motion quiet, so that I could easily see to the bottom, which did not appear to be more than a foot below the surface. Gazing into this transparent water, as I walked, I saw a large trout glide across the stream, and disappear under the grassy bank which overhung the opposite side. I instantly stopped. This was a much larger fish than any I had caught, and I determined to try for him.

I stepped back from the bank, so as to be out of sight, and put a fine grasshopper on my hook; then I lay, face downward, on the grass, and worked myself slowly forward until I could see the middle of the stream; then quietly raising my pole, I gave my grasshopper a good swing, as if he had made a wager to jump over the stream at its widest part. But as he certainly would have failed in such an ambitious endeavour, especially if he had been caught by a puff of wind, I let him come down upon the surface of the water, a little beyond the middle of the brook. Grass-

hoppers do not sink when they fall into the water, and so I kept this fellow upon the surface, and gently moved him along, as if, with all the conceit taken out of him by the result of his ill-considered leap, he was ignominiously endeavouring to swim to shore. As I did this, I saw the trout come out from under the bank, move slowly toward the grasshopper, and stop directly under him. Trembling with anxiety and eager expectation, I endeavoured to make the movements of the insect still more natural, and, as far as I was able, I threw into him a sudden perception of his danger, and a frenzied desire to get away. But, either the trout had had all the grasshoppers he wanted, or he was able, from long experience, to perceive the difference between a natural exhibition of emotion and a histrionic imitation of it, for he slowly turned, and, with a few slight movements of his tail, glided back under the bank. In vain did the grasshopper continue his frantic efforts to reach the shore; in vain did he occasionally become exhausted, and sink a short distance below the surface; in vain did he do everything that he knew, to show that he appreciated what a juicy and delicious morsel he was, and how he feared that the trout might yet be tempted to seize him; the fish did not come out again.

Then I withdrew my line, and moved back from the stream. I now determined to try Mr. Trout with a fly, and I took out the paper old Peter Gruse had given me. I did not know exactly what kind of winged

insects were in order at this time of the year, but I was sure that yellow butterflies were not particular about just what month it was, so long as the sun shone warmly. I therefore chose that one of Peter's flies which was made of the yellowest feathers, and, removing the snood and hook from my line, I hastily attached this fly, which was provided with a hook quite suitable for my desired prize. Crouching on the grass, I again approached the brook. Gaily flitting above the glassy surface of the water, in all the fancied security of tender youth and innocence, came my yellow fly. Backward and forward over the water he gracefully flew, sometimes rising a little into the air, as if to view the varied scenery of the woods and mountains, and then settling for a moment close to the surface, better to inspect his glittering image as it came up from below, and showing in his every movement his intense enjoyment of summertime and life.

Out from his dark retreat now came the trout; and settling quietly at the bottom of the brook, he appeared to regard the venturesome insect with a certain interest. But he must have detected the iron barb of vice beneath the mask of blitheful innocence, for, after a short deliberation, the trout turned and disappeared under the bank. As he slowly moved away, he seemed to be bigger than ever. I must catch that fish! Surely he would bite at something. It was quite evident that his mind was not wholly unsusceptible to

emotions emanating from an awakening appetite, and I believed that if he saw exactly what he wanted, he would not neglect an opportunity of availing himself of it. But what did he want? I must certainly find out. Drawing myself back again, I took off the yellow fly, and put on another. This was a white one, with black blotches, like a big miller moth which had fallen into an ink-pot. It was certainly a conspicuous creature, and as I crept forward and sent it swooping over the stream, I could not see how any trout, with a single insectivorous tooth in his head, could fail to rise to such an occasion. But this trout did not rise. He would not even come out from under his bank to look at the swiftly flitting creature. He probably could see it well enough from where he was.

But I was not to be discouraged. I put on another fly; a green one with a red tail. It did not look like any insect that I had ever seen, but I thought that the trout might know more about such things than I. He did come out to look at it, but probably considering it a product of that modern æstheticism which sacrifices natural beauty to mediæval crudeness of colour and form, he returned without evincing any disposition to countenance this style of art.

It was evident that it would be useless to put on any other flies, for the two I had left were a good deal bedraggled, and not nearly so attractive as those I had used. Just before leaving the house that morning Peter's son had given me a wooden matchbox filled

with worms for bait, which, although I did not expect to need, I put in my pocket. As a last resort I determined to try the trout with a worm. I selected the plumpest and most comely of the lot; I put a new hook on my line; I looped him about it in graceful coils, and cautiously approached the water, as before. Now a worm never attempts to leap wildly across a flowing brook, nor does he flit in thoughtless innocence through the sunny air, and over the bright transparent stream. If he happens to fall into the water, he sinks to the bottom; and if he be of a kind not subject to drowning, he generally endeavours to secrete himself under a stone, or to burrow in the soft mud. With this knowledge of his nature I gently dropped my worm upon the surface of the stream, and then allowed him to sink slowly. Out sailed the trout from under the bank, but stopped before reaching the sinking worm. There was a certain something in his action which seemed to indicate a disgust at the sight of such plebeian food, and a fear seized me that he might now swim off, and pay no further attention to my varied baits. Suddenly there was a ripple in the water, and I felt a pull on the line. Instantly I struck; and then there was a tug. My blood boiled through every vein and artery, and I sprang to my feet. I did not give him the butt: I did not let him run with yards of line down the brook; nor reel him in, and let him make another mad course upstream: I did not turn him over as he jumped into the air; nor endeavour,

in any way, to show him that I understood those tricks, which his depraved nature prompted him to play upon the angler. With an absolute dependence upon the strength of old Peter's tackle, I lifted the fish. Out he came from the water, which held him with a gentle suction as if unwilling to let him go, and then he whirled through the air like a meteor flecked with rosy fire, and landed on the fresh green grass a dozen feet behind me. Down on my knees I dropped before him as he tossed and rolled, his beautiful spots and colours glistening in the sun. He was truly a splendid trout, fully a foot long, round and heavy. Carefully seizing him, I easily removed the hook from the bony roof of his capacious mouth thickly set with sparkling teeth, and then I tenderly killed him, with all his pluck, as old Peter would have said, still in him.

I covered the rest of the fish in my basket with wet plantain leaves, and laid my trout-king on this cool green bed. Then I hurried off to the old man, whom I saw coming out of the woods. When I opened my basket and showed him what I had caught, Peter looked surprised, and, taking up the trout, examined it.

"Why, this is a big fellow," he said. "At first I thought it was Barney Sloat's boss trout, but it isn't long enough for him. Barney showed me his trout, that gen'rally keeps in a deep pool, where a tree has fallen over the stream down there. Barney tells me

he often sees him, and he's been tryin' fur two years to ketch him, but he never has, and I say he never will, fur them big trout's got too much sense to fool round any kind of victuals that's got a string to it. They let a little fish eat all he wants, and then they eat him. How did you ketch this one?"

I gave an account of the manner of the capture, to which Peter listened with interest and approval.

"If you'd a stood off and made a cast at that feller, you'd either have caught him at the first flip, which isn't likely, as he didn't seem to want no feather-flies, or else you'd a skeered him away. That's all well enough in the tumblin' water, where you gen'rally go fur trout, but the man that's got the true feelin' fur fish will try to suit his idees to theyrn, and if he keeps on doin' that, he's like to learn a thing or two that may do him good. That's a fine fish, and you ketched him well. I've got a lot of 'em, but nothin' of that heft."

After luncheon we fished for an hour or two, with no result worth recording, and then we started for home.

When we reached the farm the old man went into the barn, and I took the fish into the house. I found the two pretty daughters in the large room, where the eating and some of the cooking was done. I opened my basket, and with great pride showed them the big trout I had caught. They evidently thought it was a large fish, but they looked at each other, and smiled in a way that I did not understand. I had expected from

them, at least, as much admiration for my prize and my skill as their father had shown.

"You don't seem to think much of this fine trout that I took such trouble to catch," I remarked.

"You mean," said the elder girl, with a laugh, "that you bought of Barney Sloat."

I looked at her in astonishment.

"Barney was along here to-day," she said, "and he told about your buying your fish of him."

"Bought of him!" I exclaimed indignantly. "A little string of fish at the bottom of the basket I bought of him, but all the others, and this big one, I caught myself."

"Oh, of course," said the pretty daughter, "bought the little ones and caught all the big ones."

"Barney Sloat ought to have kept his mouth shut," said the younger pretty daughter, looking at me with an expression of pity. "He'd got his money, and he hadn't no business to go telling on people. Nobody likes that sort of thing. But this big fish is a real nice one, and you shall have it for your supper."

"Thank you," I said, with dignity, and left the room.

I did not intend to have any further words with these young women on this subject, but I cannot deny that I was annoyed and mortified. This was the result of a charitable action. I think I was never more proud of anything than of catching that trout; and it was a very considerable downfall suddenly to find myself

regarded as a mere city man fishing with a silver hook. But, after all, what did it matter? But the more I said this to myself, the more was I impressed with the fact that it mattered a great deal.

The boy who did not seem to be accounted a member of the family came into the house, and as he passed me he smiled good-humouredly, and said: "Buyed 'em!"

I felt like throwing a chair at him, but refrained out of respect to my host. Before supper the old man came out on to the porch where I was sitting. "It seems," said he, "that my gals has got it inter their heads that you bought that big fish of Barney Sloat, and as I can't say I seed you ketch it, they're not willin' to give in, 'specially as I didn't git no such big one. 'Tain't wise to buy fish when you're goin' fishin' yourself. It's pretty certain to tell agen you."

"You ought to have given me that advice before," I said, somewhat shortly. "You saw me buy the fish."

"You don't s'pose," said old Peter, "that I'm goin' to say anythin' to keep money out of my neighbour's pockets. We don't do that way in these parts. But I've told the gals they're not to speak another word about it, so you needn't give your mind no worry on that score. And now let's go in to supper. If you're as hungry as I am, there won't be many of them fish left fur breakfast."

For two days longer I remained in this neighbourhood, wandering alone over the hills, and up the

mountainsides, and by the brooks, which tumbled and gurgled through the lonely forest. Each evening I brought home a goodly supply of trout, but never a great one like the noble fellow for which I angled in the meadow stream.

On the morning of my departure I stood on the porch with old Peter waiting for the arrival of the mail driver, who was to take me to the nearest railroad town.

"I don't want to say nothin'," remarked the old man, "that would keep them fellers with the jinted poles from stoppin' at my house when they comes to these parts a-fishin'. I ain't got no objections to their poles; 'tain't that. And I don't mind nuther their standin' off, and throwin' their flies as fur as they've a mind to; that's not it. And it ain't even the way they have of worryin' their fish. I wouldn't do it myself, but if they like it, that's their business. But what does rile me is the cheeky way in which they stand up and say that there isn't no decent way of fishin' but their way. And that to a man that's ketched more fish, of more different kinds, with more game in 'em, and had more fun at it, with a lot less money and less tomfoolin' than any fishin' feller that ever come here and talked to me like an old cat tryin' to teach a dog to ketch rabbits. No, sir; agen I say that I don't take no money fur entertainin' the only man that ever come out here to go a-fishin' in a plain, Christian way. But if you feel tetchy about not payin' nothin', you kin

send me one of them poles in three pieces, a good strong one, that'll lift Barney Sloat's trout, if ever I hook him."

I sent him the rod; and next summer I am going up to see him use it.

ONCE ON A SUNDAY

by Philip Wylie

SOMEWHERE UP THE RIVER A NOON WHISTLE BLEW; quiet came over the boatyard. The band saw stopped screaming first; mallets and hammers fell silent; old man Kane's handsaw was last. Crunch Adams, acting yard superintendent that day, picked up the box of lunch his wife, Sari, had prepared for him and walked over to the lean, gnarled shipwright. Crunch inspected the intricately worked chunk of madeira—looked his thoughts—and the old fellow nodded with satisfaction.

Crunch sat in the shade of a cabbage palm, out of the heat. Kane moved beside him and opened a pasteboard shoebox. The two men began to eat. Multiple riffles moved along the turgid river at their feet.

"Mullet," Crunch said.

"Mullet," the old man agreed.

The backdrop of Miami glittered in the sunlight and murmured with an abnormal springtime industry

occasioned by the presence of thousands of soldiers and sailors. By and by Crunch's eyes traveled purposefully to the blue-grey sides of the hauled crash boat on which they were working. "Navy'd like to have her back in the water tomorrow night."

"No doubt," said the skillful old man. "But it's Sunday."

The Poseidon's skipper nodded. "Yeah." He let time pass. They watched a brace of pelicans float up the river on stiff wings. "Enemy works on Sunday, though. Usually attacks then, if possible."

Mr. Kane spat. "Swine."

"Short-handed," Crunch went on. "We are. Everybody is. If we could get that piece fitted tomorrow morning, they could paint it later—"

"I'm a strict Presbyterian," the old man replied firmly. "At eleven tomorrow, I'll be in church, that's where I'll be."

"I know how it is." Crunch's expression was innocent. "I fished a Presbyterian minister once—on a Sunday."

"You don't *say!*"

Desperate, the Poseidon's mate, was swabbing down. The sun was a red disc—a stagy decoration; it emitted no glare but it dyed the line of boats at the Gulf Stream Dock a faint orange. Soon it would be gone. Crunch and Sari were up on the pier, laughing with the last customer. A tall stranger made his way

past them, stared at the boats' names, and walked lithely to the stern of the Poseidon.

"Are you Crunch Adams?" he asked. His "r's" burred with a trace of Scotland and the voice that pronounced them had a slow sonority.

"I'm Des, the mate. Crunch is yonder."

The eyes of the stranger were cavernous. His nose was large and beaklike; above the six-foot level of his craggy head was a shock of iron-grey hair. Des wondered what sort of man he was and had a partial answer when the man saw young Bill Adams. Bill was three, then—proudly toting a suitcase for his father. The evening breeze stirred his blond curls. He tugged and grunted—a scale model of Hercules, in a blue sunsuit. A twinkle came in the man's recessed eyes and his broad mouth broke into a smile. "Likely lad!"

"Crunch's. The skipper's."

"I've been told he's the best. It shows—in the offspring."

Des began to like the guy. "Hey, Crunch!" he called.

"My problem," said the man, as he and the two charter-boatmen put their heads together, "is as difficult as it is simple. I'm a minister o' the gospel—a Presbyterian—though I wouldn't like it to be held against me."

Crunch and Des chuckled.

"When I went to school in Edinburgh—which was a considerable long while ago—I used to slip out as

often as the opportunity afforded and cast a fly for trout and sometimes for salmon. I haven't wet a line since." He rubbed his chin. "My daughter spends her winters here with her husband, who's a man of means. I've joined them for a few days' vacation and my son-in-law insists I put in a few on the sea. He's footing the bill—and a man ought to keep in good with his son-in-law, don't you think?" He beamed.

"Very sound," Crunch said.

"But there's more to it than that," the man went on. "Do you mind if I light a pipe? It's safe on these gasoline boats?"

Crunch struck the match.

The prospective customer sat down with a sigh of composure. He sniffed the air. "Salty. I like it. Smells as good as the recollection of a frith. Unfortunately, for the past twenty-five years, I've hardly smelled it at all. I've been preaching the gospel inland. Not that it isn't as desperately needed there as on the coasts. I am simply explaining the rest of my predicament—an altogether happy one, as it chances. This vacation I'm on comes between my old church and a new one I'm to take directly after Christmas. What's that yonder?" He pointed with the stem of his pipe.

Crunch looked in time to see the triangular top of a dark fin ease into the blue water. "Porpoise."

"You don't say! They come here in this Bay?"

"Some of 'em live in here."

"Well!" He watched the big mammal rise and

blow. "Fine creature! But to get to the point. Where I'm taking the new pastorate, fishing is partly a business and largely a recreation, besides. It's in New Jersey, at a place called Antasquan—a big town or small city, whichever you will. Some of my new congregation are commercial fishermen, and some of the wealthier ones are boat-owners, like yourselves. They go out for big tunny, I understand. Then, there's something called 'blues' they're partial to—"

"We know a little about it," Crunch said appreciatively. "We've fished a few summers from the Manasquan nearby."

The minister smiled. "Which, no doubt, is one of the reasons my son-in-law stipulated you two! What can a man expect in a corporation lawyer, though, except guile? At any rate, I've got a congregation of fishermen—and golf players, to boot. Being a Scot, I can handle the golf, on week days, though it somewhat drains my congregations on the Sabbath, I hear. As fishing does, to an even greater degree, in the summer. But I like to know something of the pursuits of the men I preach to. So I'm doubly glad to be able to take advantage of this vacation to find out what I can of salt-water fishing. Have I made myself clear?"

"You sure have, Mr.—?"

"McGill. The Reverend Doctor Arthur McGill. And if, in the heat of excitement in the three days I've got to fish, it should become necessary to use a shorter term, you'll find I respond to 'Mac.' "

He shook hands with them to seal the bargain.

When he was gone, Des grinned at the descending twilight. "The trouble is, there aren't enough ministers like that. If there were, I'd go to church oftener, myself."

"Just what I was thinking," his skipper agreed.

The Reverend Doctor Arthur McGill appeared on the Gulf Stream Dock at seven o'clock the following morning—a green-visored hat flopping above his grey mane and a huge hamper carried lightly over his bony arm. He took the gap between dock and stern in an easy stride and deposited the basket.

It was a cool, breezy day—it would be choppy outside—but, if he knew it, he did not seem concerned. "Bracing weather," he said. "I hadn't expected it of the tropics. I rose before the servants and picked my own grapefruit from a tree in the yard. There was something burning out toward the Everglades and it recalled my autumn fire anywhere in the world. But the grapefruit was a distinctly pagan note; it made me understand a little why it is that north country men always have a sense of guilt in the south. It ought to be snowing and blowing—and here you are picking fruit!"

Des was already hanging the bow lines on the dolphins. The Poseidon pushed into the ship channel and started east. At the jetty-mouth, the outgoing tide, bulled by the easterly wind, threw up an unpredictable maelstrom of lumpy current; the Poseidon tossed,

smashed hard and found her sea gait for the day. Three warm December weeks had changed, overnight, into the Floridian equivalent of a winter day—a day with a twelve-mile breeze and a temperature in the shade of sixty—a "cold" day, in the opinion of the natives.

Crunch cut baits. The minister wrapped an elbow around one of the canopy supports and watched, his eyes bright under his tangled brows. Once or twice, the skipper glanced at him covertly; he wasn't going to be seasick. He took in each detail, as the strip was sliced wafer-thin, tapered, pointed, beveled, and pierced for the hook. "It's an art, I can see that."

"The idea is to make it flutter in the water—like a fish with a busy tail." Crunch dropped over a bait on a leader and tested it to make sure it would not spin and wind up—or unwind—the line. He handed the rod to Reverend McGill and, under the same intense scrutiny, he arranged two balao on the outrigger lines. Then, because his passenger looked quizzical, he explained the operation of outriggers.

"You see," said the minister, "I'm a dub and a tyro and I have plenty of need to learn all this. A congregation of fishing enthusiasts will listen with a polite and patronizing interest if their domini discusses the fine points of netting fishes in the Sea of Galilee two thousand years ago. But if you can bring the matter up to date—put it in terms of outriggers, so to speak

—and use it in an illustration, you may even wake up the habitual sleepers."

Crunch laughed. "I get the idea, parson. Now. About 'blues.' Being a part-time Jersey fisherman myself, I understand the Jersey attitude. It's cold today —and we may run along like this for hours without a strike—so I'll explain what they do off the 'Squan Inlet—and why. Their fishing is done this way—and other ways."

"I'd appreciate it." The minister snuggled into the fighting chair and pulled his muffler tighter.

Crunch was deep in a lucid description of the art of chumming for tuna—remembering to cite the fact that Jersey old-timers still call them "horse mackerel" —when there was a splash behind the center bait. Reverend McGill went taut as his reel warbled.

"Bonita!" Crunch said. "Just hang on till he gets that run out of his system."

Reverend McGill hung on—and hung on properly —with his rod high enough so that no sudden bend could snap it over the stern and low enough so that he had room to lift it and take in slack in the event the fish turned suddenly. It did. The rod went higher and the minister began to reel. He brought the bonita to within a few yards of the boat and it sounded a good seventy-five feet. His rod tip shivered with the rapid tail action. He pumped the fish up, under Crunch's instruction. It sounded again—ran again— and came to gaff.

Crunch brought it aboard and the exhilarated minister looked. "Magnificent creature! Herringbone back—and the underside as white and sleek as alabaster! Funny thing! It's almost as big as any fish I ever caught in my life—and yet it pulled so hard I expected a fish my own size!"

"Bonitas are strong," Crunch said. He resumed his discussion of chumming. His back was turned to the water when Reverend McGill had his second strike. The minister handled the fish with considerable skill. " 'Cuda," Crunch said, after a moment.

It proved to be a barracuda. Crunch flipped it over the gunwale, showed the ferocious teeth by clamping the fish's head under the lid of the box in the stern, and removed the hook with pliers in a gingerly fashion. The Poseidon ran steadily for some two hours after that. Then there was a bluish flash under one of the outrigger baits and its line drifted gently down to the water only to spring tight like the wire of a snare. Crunch eyed the line as it cut the surface—pointing, in a curve, to a fish that was barely under water. "Dolphin," he explained. "Get ready for him to jump. And when he does jump—watch him."

When the fish jumped, it was quite a sight. This particular dolphin at the particular instant was green and silver. Sometimes they are luminous cobalt and silver or gold—with pale blue spots. Sometimes they are almost pure gold or silver. Their rainbow patterns cannot be predicted—they change in seconds—and

they range through all the natural colors save red and those with red in them, as well as through the spectra of precious metals.

"I know," the minister said quietly and between breaths, when Crunch gaffed the dolphin, "why people write poetry about them." He watched Crunch bait up again and went back to his vigil. "It's amazing," he continued, "what eyes you have. Now, in all three strikes, all I saw was a flicker and a lot of spray. But—each time—you saw the fish and named it correctly."

Crunch laughed. "I didn't see the fish, itself, any time. Except, as you say, an impression of a fish. I could tell what they were by the way your rod tip behaved—by the angle at which the fish fought—by a lot of little things."

"They must be fine points, for fair! I don't suppose you reveal them to the novitiate—the lucky novitiate, I might add?"

"Why not?" Crunch grinned benignly. "Take—the bonita. He was first. He hits hard and fast, usually at a sharp angle to the course of the bait. When he feels the hook he puts on every ounce of power he's got. He goes away, maybe for thirty yards or so, and then, still feeling the hook, he goes down. He'll bore straight down or go down in a spiral, like an auger. Now there's a fish out here that's related to the tuna, called an albacore. He does the same thing. But when

the albacore swims, it's like a glide, all power and no wiggle. With a bonita there's the wiggle. A flutter. You see it in the rod tip. You feel it in your arms."

"You do that," the minister agreed.

" 'Cuda's can sound—or run—or jump. In fact, they usually give a jump or two like a pike or a muskie. On the same tackle, they're even stronger, I believe. But they do one thing that's characteristic—they jerk. If you get one near the boat you can see him do it under water. He'll yank his head back and forth trying to get rid of the hook or to break the line, just the way a bulldog yanks."

"And the dolphin?"

"He always skims along at a terrific rate right below the surface. You can tell that because your line, instead of boring down into the sea, will be stretching out over it for a long way. Then the dolphin will circle, first one way and then the other, in big arcs. That is, he will unless he's foul-hooked. Hooked from the outside, in the back, say. Or hooked through the eye. In that case, he's very apt to sound—and if you haven't seen him when he hit, you'll be hard put to guess what you're fighting. Of course, you occasionally do see dolphin before they hit, because they sometimes make several bounds into the air to get to the bait, as if they were impatient with the resistance of the water."

"I see." The minister mused, "Funny, that. If

you're fishing for salmon—you take salmon. You know what you've got when you have your rise. Trout, too, unless you happen to encounter a chub or dace. Here, though, the possibilities are vast."

"There are hundreds."

The minister thought that over. "And what would a sailfish be like? That is, if we were to have the fantastic good fortune—?"

So Crunch told him about the ways of sailfish. And in the end, he was, as usual, completely at a loss: "What I've said goes for the average sailfish. But you're continually running into the exception. The fellow who just gulps the bait and runs. The one who strikes like a bonita—with only a flash under the bait. And then, when you know it was a sail because you saw its high fin and its bill—and you hook it—it'll possibly turn out to be a white marlin."

"I presume, in the three days I have, there's no chance of that?"

"I dunno," Crunch answered. "There's always some chance. They're tailing today, though. I've seen a couple. They don't strike, as a rule, when they're running south from a cold snap."

The minister nodded. Crunch knew by his attitude during the discussion of sailfish that the Reverend Doctor McGill had a very definite dream about his three days of deep-sea angling and the dream was centered around that particular breed of fish. In his mind's eye, the minister wanted not only what knowl-

edge of marine angling he could glean from the period, but a particular object, a mounted sail, to hang, probably, in his study, where the visiting members of his new congregation could observe it and admire. Reverend McGill did not say so. He was too humble a man. But Crunch knew.

While the skipper was contemplating that matter, the novice in the Poseidon's stern had another strike. The reel sang. The fish ran. Then it went deep. The rod tip fluttered. "A bonita!" the preacher cried with certainty.

"Well—it's not quite like a bonita. A little, just a shade, less powerful. Not quite so vicious. It might be a small bonita, at that. But I think it's a kingfish."

It was a kingfish. The minister chuckled. "You're not giving away all your trade secrets in one day!"

"Well, that one wasn't easy. I couldn't be sure myself. If we call three quarters of them correctly we're doing fine."

"I won't be so rash and conceited on the next," the minister promised. But there wasn't any "next." They ate the excellent lunch in the big hamper. They trolled the length of the island that is Miami Beach. Then they turned south and went as far as the old lighthouse. But there were no more strikes upon which the minister could test his fresh knowledge.

That evening the Poseidon came in as late as the winter sun would allow. "I've had a wonderful day," the minister said. "I've thought of at least six new

sermons. I've settled in my head a minute point of ethics brought to me by one of my former flock which stuck me for a long time. I've caught four prime fish—whoppers, all—and two of 'em, you say, are superb eating. There's a good fifteen pounds of meat for the larders of myself and the friends of my son-in-law. And I'll never be able to thank you enough. The best part of it all is," his eyes crinkled, "we'll be at it again in the morning—and the day after, also. That's what they mean when they call this place a paradise on earth!"

Crunch stopped the recital and carefully poured a cup of coffee from his thermos. He raised his eyebrows enquiringly at old man Kane. The shipwright nodded and held out a cup from which he had been drinking milk. "Thanks, Crunch. So—what happened? Did he get a sail?"

"No," Crunch said. He peered reminiscently at the murky river and tossed a coral pebble to break the immaculate surface. "No. Doctor McGill never caught a sail, so far as I am aware."

"I'm disappointed."

"Maybe he wasn't! Des and I got fond of that gent. Whatever a good man is, he's it. And by that I mean he was both a man, and good. We fished Friday, from seven till dark, and got skunked. It was raw and windy with low clouds. Not a strike. But the old boy saw a whale, a fine-back, that came up close to the Poseidon

and cruised along, blowing—and he insisted it made the day worth while.

"Then—Saturday came. His last day. He was going home Monday and he was planning to take in a couple of Miami preachers Sunday and Sunday night. So we started at six, in the dark, and we dragged a bait till night. He caught one grouper over the reef, and a rock hind, and he had one sailfish rise. I swear the old boy's hair stood on end. The sail came like an upside-down yacht with her keel out, and it followed the bait for a mile, but it never hit. Old Mac McGill stood up the whole time, muttering. First I thought he was praying and then I had a kind of shock because I thought he was swearing, but he wasn't doing either —he was just coaching the fish—like a quarterback on the bench when his team's in a spot. The fish never did hit, just eyed that bait, wallowed behind it, and finally swam away. And then it got dark and we came in and the domini's vacation was over. He said he'd be back some day when his pocketbook could stand it and he said he'd had more fun than ever before in his life. His eyes shot sparks and he meant every word of it. He was disappointed, I am certain, but not as much disappointed as pleased. Des and I, of course, tried to make up for the thin fishing by telling him as many stories as we could—and by giving him as much dope as we knew how."

"A good sport," Kane nodded.

"The real thing. Well, he shook our hands and

thanked us and went away. Mr. Williams, the dock manager, had us down Sunday for a party—we didn't know the people—and we sat around Saturday evening feeling pretty low about the preacher. Sunday, we got down about seven and our party hadn't shown up. So we just sat around some more. Lots of people get a special kick out of deep-sea fishing for the main and simple reason that you don't have to get out at the crack of dawn. I mean, they'll hit at noon just as often as they'll hit at daybreak, which isn't like freshwater stuff. Anyway—"

During the night the wind had hauled. The norther had blown itself out and the Trade Wind, dawdling back from the southeast, had taken its place, pushing the cold air aside, dissipating the lowering clouds, and substituting the regimented wool-balls of Caribbean cumulus. The thermometer, between midnight and sunrise, had gone up fifteen degrees and a balminess characteristic of Florida had supplanted the sharp chill. Even the first level bars of sunshine were warm and it was certain that by noon the temperature in the shade would be eighty. On such days, after a cold-weather famine, the sailfish are likely to be ravenous. Crunch knew it, and Des, and they wondered in their separate silences what Reverend McGill would think about it. Because he knew, too. They'd told him how, as a rule, the sailfish would come up fighting on these days when the weather broke.

By nine o'clock, they were getting restless. Their party hadn't appeared. All the other boats were out, with the exception of one, engine parts of which were strewn over its stern cockpit for repair. Des was commenting on the laggardliness of some people when Crunch said, "Look. There's Reverend McGill."

The minister stepped from a car. He was wearing a neat serge suit and a high, starched collar. He walked down the dock with a sheepish expression and said, "That was my son-in-law. Off to play golf—like too many in my own congregations! I went along with him this far—I can walk the balance of the way to the kirk." Then he realized that the boats had gone. "How does it happen you're still hanging to the pilings?"

"We were chartered," Des said bitterly, "by some slug-a-bed named Ellsworth Coates."

The minister turned pale. He swallowed. "That," he finally murmured, "is the name of my son-in-law—the heathen tempter!"

Crunch merely glanced up at the tall man on the dock. Then he squinted across the Bay. He neither smiled nor frowned—just squinted. "I guess he must have seen the weather prediction—and realized what it would probably be like out there today."

Reverend McGill sat down shakily. "It's like him! The lawyer's guile! Dropping me here to walk to church! And with you two boys waiting, steam up and bait in the box! What does he take me for—a

weakling? Is some crafty second-rate, amoral attorney to be the first to make me break the Sabbath? Not that, in the proper cause, I mightn't! I'm none of your hardshell preachers! I've been known far and wide as a liberal man, these long years! But a precedent is a precedent and I've kept the Lord's day, in my own fashion, as an example. Fie to Ellsworth—the wretch!"

"This might turn out to be a good cause," Des said. "After all, it's a day in a hundred, and you wanted your future parish to feel you were one of them."

"It could be a day in a million!" the minister said scornfully.

Time passed—a good deal of time. Crunch began to repair a light rod which had lost a guide in an encounter with a wahoo. Up where the Gulf Stream Dock joined the Florida shore a school of big jack got under a walloping school of small mullet. The result was aquatic chaos: fish showered into the air as if they were being tossed up in barrelfuls by Davy Jones himself. The minister watched, goggle-eyed, and said something that Crunch thought was, "It's more than flesh can withstand!" But Crunch wasn't certain.

And then the Clarissa B. came in. She came in because one of her four passengers, a novice, had been taken ill—although the sea was smooth: only a vague ground swell kept it from being as calm as pavement. The Clarissa, as she approached, throwing two smart

wings of water from her bows, was flying four sailfish flags.

"Four of them!" Reverend McGill whispered disconsolately. "I could have stood two—or possibly three—!"

The boat turned, backed in smartly, and deposited her shaky passenger with little ceremony: the other anglers were manifestly annoyed at the interruption and anxious to get back on the Gulf Stream. She pulled away from her slip again—showing four forked tails above her gunwales.

"Good fishing, eh?" Crunch called to the skipper.

"They'll jump in the boat!" he yelled back. "It's red-hot! We've already had a triple and two double-headers and a single!" He turned his wheel and purred into the blue distance.

Reverend McGill sighed and stood up. He shook out his full length of supple anatomy. He brushed back his iron-grey hair. "In any event," he said, grinning, "I'll not rationalize. I had it on the tip of my tongue to say that the Reverend Doctor Stone, whom I had intended to hear this morning, isn't so much of a preacher-man. We'll agree that he's the finest preacher in the south—and that by going fishing, I'm committing a mortal sin of the first magnitude. But—boys—let's get a lunch on board and make all the haste we can to violate the canon that has to do with this precious and altogether magnificent day!" He took off his collar as he came aboard.

By four o'clock in the afternoon, the lone passenger was stunned. In the interim, no less than seven sailfish had come up from the purple depths and done their best to be caught by the cleric. But in each instance that gentleman, through bad luck and inexperience, had failed to bring his fish to boat. In testament of his effort there was a broken rod. There were blisters on his fingers. There was a burn on his left arm where the running line had cut him. There was an empty reel from which the line had been stripped. And there was on the deck, a leader to which was still attached the upper half of a broken hook. But no sailfish flag flew from the Poseidon's outrigger.

The loquacious Reverend McGill was dour, and his accent had become more Scottish. "I will nae say it's injustice," he proclaimed morosely, "an' a' would not ha' missed this day for the worrld—but it's a sterrn way to remind a mon of his evil intent!"

Crunch and Des exchanged glances. "There'll be more of 'em, parson," Des said encouragingly. "Just —take it easy."

And, even while he spoke, the outrigger line on the port side fell again and a big boil of water showed briefly where the bait had been. The line came tight and the minister struck to set the hook. The fish ran off rapidly for about forty yards and sounded. "It's no sailfish this time," he cried. "A bonita, I think. At least, perhaps we'll ha' one small fishie to show for our sins!"

Crunch looked critically at the bend in the rod. "If it's a bonita, it's the father of all bonitas," he said quietly.

"Very unlikely," Reverend McGill replied as he jockeyed to get in a few feet of slack. "Nothing sensational. The last two hours, I've realized I was predestined to have misfortune to the end of the day. But at least my face will be saved. I'll never have to exhibit a sailfish I caught on Sunday and acknowledge my guilt. The deed will be a secret between the two of us —and my son-in-law—who will use it, no doubt, for some blackmailing tomfoolery, one day. Now—he's coming toward us nicely!"

The fish swam toward the Poseidon for several yards. Then it turned, still deep under the water, and ran three hundred yards with the speed of an express train. The reel screamed. Crunch yelled. Des brought the Poseidon around in a fast arc. They chased the fish at full throttle for five hundred yards more before the minister stopped losing line from a spool that was by then no thicker than his thumb.

"It must be a sailfish, after all," Reverend McGill murmured.

"It's no sailfish," Crunch replied. His mouth was tight and he shot an enquiring glance at Des.

"What then?"

"I dunno. I dunno, Reverend. Maybe a marlin—"

"A marlin! It isn't possible—!"

"I think," Des called, "it's an Allison tuna. Better

take it easy, Mac. You've got a long fight on your hands if it is."

"I'll gentle it like a baby," the angler promised. "I'm getting a bit of line, now." He tried tentatively and then with fury. "He's running to us—*to* us—faster than I can reel!"

Crunch waved—and waved again. The Poseidon leaped away from the fish but even at full gun she barely made enough speed so that the man on the rod could keep his line taut. Presently Crunch signalled again and the boat stood still. "Mac," as Des had called him in the stress of excitement, began to horse his fish toward the boat, lifting slowly until his bowed rod came high, dropping the tip swiftly, and winding in the slack thus gained. Two feet at a time, he brought the fish toward the place where the two guides leaned in tense concentration and where he labored sweatily. When the reel-spool was well filled with line, the fish turned and raced away again—a hundred yards, two, three. The process was repeated. The fish ran.

On the fifth struggle to the boat Reverend McGill gasped, "It's a new tribulation! I've hung a whale! Every joint in me is protesting—!"

"Stay with it," Crunch breathed fervently.

"Mon—I'm a *Scot*."

He stayed with it. Stayed with it until it tired and until, an hour and three quarters after he had hooked it, a head and jaws rolled out of water not forty feet

from the Poseidon. Crunch felt himself grow weak. He just stood there. Des said in a small voice, "You see it?"

"Yeah."

"What is it?"

"I dunno." Crunch repeated the words as if they angered him. "I dunno. It was red—wasn't it?"

"Yeah. It was red."

"But it wasn't a snapper," Crunch continued. "Not a snapper—not a monster mangrove snapper. I never saw it before. Mac—take it mighty easy, now. It's something new you've got there."

"I couldn't put any strength on it if I had to," the minister said grittily. Then he did put on strength. The fish made a last flurry—a rush, a mighty splash—and Crunch got the leader in his gloved hand. Swiftly, skillfully, he rammed home the gaff. The tail hammered on the boat's hull like a piston. Des jumped clear down from the canopy without hanging and made a noose around the leader. He dropped the rope into the sea. The two men pulled, and the fish came aboard tail first.

It was red, scarlet, from mouth to caudal. Its underside was greenish-white. It had big fins and a square tail. It was toothed. Its eyes were green. It gasped like a grouper and flopped heavily. They guessed it weighed about a hundred and eighty.

The minister flexed his raging arms slowly, caught some of his wind, stirred his back a little as if he were

afraid any further motion would shatter it, and he looked and looked at the fish. "You mean—this is one you boys can't give a name to?"

Crunch said slowly, "No, Mac. And I don't think anybody—any taxidermist, any ichthyologist—can give it a name, either. I think it's a new one. Somebody comes in with a brand new one every year or so, around these parts. Tonight you're gonna, Mac."

"Whatever the name is," Des said with the voice of a man who had seen a miracle, "part of it will probably be McGill—forever."

Crunch walked stiffly to the radio telephone. He put in a call for Hal—and for Bob Breastedt—the two foremost piscatorial authorities on the coast. "It's built like an amberjack—something," he said into the transmitter. "Fought like one—more or less. But it has scales like a tarpon, almost, and fins like a bass, and the darned thing's red all over!"

The experts came to the dock to meet the Poseidon —and so did the reporters.

It was a new one. Part of its long scientific name eventually became McGillia.

Many weeks later, Crunch had a letter from the minister. It was postmarked "Antasquan, N.J." It said, in part:

". . . and the celebrated catch we made that memorable day has become a not unmixed blessing. It served the purpose of giving my new flock an advance notice that I'm a fisherman of distinction.

Indeed, the reputation carried ahead of me by the national publicity was so great that I'm alarmed whenever I remember that next summer I'll have to go out and show my lack of proficiency on the blues and the school tuna—not to mention the great horse mackerel. However, I'll take my chances on that.

"The point is, the fact that I caught the fish on the Sabbath was one which the press associations did not glaze over. On the contrary, they prominently noted it, and my congregation here was quick to make the discovery. Some of them chided me. And all of those who fish, and those who play golf, are smugly planning to be absent from their pews as soon as the spring weather breaks. After all, their domini fishes on Sunday! This, however, has set me thinking—this—and the lesson in wiliness I learned from my son-in-law.

"Even now, war work is engaging the daytime hours of some of my people on Sunday—so I have stressed the evening service. It is already a feature in this city and the kirk is full every Sunday night though it was formerly sparsely attended at that hour. Come spring, my friends, and I expect to have most of the golfers and anglers in the evening habit and it'll be another bit of triumph I can credit to you and your fine ship! In short, I'm punished by the richly deserved lampoons of a fine group of people—and rewarded with an evening attendance that beats the old morning service average!

"The fish itself arrived in due course—splendidly mounted and a thing of wonder. In that, I lost out, also—because I still have no symbol of my dubious skill to hang on my study wall. One of my parishioners is on the board of the American Museum of Natural History—and there the creature hangs. Still—I think the day was well spent—for myself and my fellow men—don't you?"

Crunch rose and stretched. He looked at his watch. One o'clock. Presently, the sound of the band saw rent the air. The boatyard resumed work for the U.S. Navy. Crunch had been reading the letter—having taken it from his hip pocket at the proper moment. He handed it, now, to the old shipwright, who stared blankly.

"You mean—you brought this thing here this morning?"

"Sure," Crunch said.

"You knew I was going to tell you I wouldn't work tomorrow?"

Crunch nodded. "Yep. But we need you—if we're going to get that job back in the water on time for Uncle Sam."

Kane glanced down at the name of the church on the letterhead. He sucked his teeth. "Well," he said slowly, "if that preacher can go fishing—and have it turn out all right—I guess I can work."

"It was for a cause. So's this."

"I still don't get it! You planned to tell me this story—and brought the letter to prove it was the truth—"

"I'm like the preacher's son-in-law," Crunch said as he walked away. "Guileful."

CROCKER'S HOLE

by R. D. Blackmore

Part I

The culm, which rises in somersetshire, and hastening into a fairer land (as the border waters wisely do) falls into the Exe near Killerton, formerly was a lovely trout stream, such as perverts the Devonshire angler from due respect toward Father Thames and the other canals round London. In the Devonshire valleys it is sweet to see how soon a spring becomes a rill, and a rill runs on into a rivulet, and a rivulet swells into a brook; and before one has time to say, "What are you at?"—before the first tree it ever spoke to is a dummy, or the first hill it ever ran down has turned blue, here we have all the airs and graces, demands and assertions of a full-grown river.

But what is the test of a river? Who shall say? "The power to drown a man," replies the river darkly. But rudeness is not argument. Rather shall we say that the power to work a good undershot wheel, without being dammed up all night in a pond, and leaving a

tidy back-stream to spare at the bottom of the orchard, is a fair certificate of riverhood. If so, many Devonshire streams attain that rank within five miles of their spring; aye, and rapidly add to it. At every turn they gather aid, from ash-clad dingle and aldered meadow, mossy rock and ferny wall, hedge-trough roofed with bramble netting, where the baby water lurks, and lanes that coming down to ford bring suicidal tribute. Arrogant, all-engrossing river, now it has claimed a great valley of its own; and whatever falls within the hill scoop, sooner or later belongs to itself. Even the crystal "shutt" that crosses the farmyard by the woodrick, and glides down an aqueduct of last year's bark for Mary to fill the kettle from; and even the tricklets that have no organs for telling or knowing their business, but only get into unwary oozings in and among the water-grass, and there make moss and forget themselves among it—one and all, they come to the same thing at last, and that is the river.

The Culm used to be a good river at Culmstock, tormented already by a factory, but not strangled as yet by a railroad. How it is now the present writer does not know, and is afraid to ask, having heard of a vile "Culm Valley Line." But Culmstock bridge was a very pretty place to stand and contemplate the ways of trout; which is easier work than to catch them. When I was just big enough to peep above the rim, or to lie upon it with one leg inside for fear of tum-

bling over, what a mighty river it used to seem, for it takes a treat there and spreads itself. Above the bridge the factory stream falls in again, having done its business, and washing its hands in the innocent half that has strayed down the meadows. Then under the arches they both rejoice and come to a slide of about two feet, and make a short, wide pool below, and indulge themselves in perhaps two islands, through which a little river always magnifies itself, and maintains a mysterious middle. But after that, all of it used to come together, and make off in one body for the meadows, intent upon nurturing trout with rapid stickles, and buttercuppy corners where fat flies may tumble in. And here you may find in the very first meadow, or at any rate you might have found, forty years ago, the celebrated "Crocker's Hole."

The story of Crocker is unknown to me, and interesting as it doubtless was, I do not deal with him, but with his Hole. Tradition said that he was a baker's boy who, during his basket-rounds, fell in love with a maiden who received the cottage-loaf, or perhaps good "Households," for her master's use. No doubt she was charming, as a girl should be, but whether she encouraged the youthful baker and then betrayed him with false *rôle*, or whether she "consisted" throughout,—as our cousins across the water express it,—is known to their *manes* only. Enough that she would not have the floury lad; and that he, after giving in his books and money, sought an untimely grave among

the trout. And this was the first pool below the bread-walk deep enough to drown a five-foot baker boy. Sad it was; but such things must be, and bread must still be delivered daily.

A truce to such reflections,—as our foremost writers always say, when they do not see how to go on with them,—but it is a serious thing to know what Crocker's Hole was like; because at a time when (if he had only persevered, and married the maid, and succeeded to the oven, and reared a large family of short-weight bakers) he might have been leaning on his crutch beside the pool, and teaching his grandson to swim by precept (that beautiful proxy for practice)—at such a time, I say, there lived a remarkably fine trout in that hole. Anglers are notoriously truthful, especially as to what they catch, or even more frequently have not caught. Though I may have written fiction, among many other sins,—as a nice old lady told me once,—now I have to deal with facts; and foul scorn would I count it ever to make believe that I caught that fish. My length at that time was not more than the butt of a four-jointed rod, and all I could catch was a minnow with a pin, which our cook Lydia would not cook, but used to say, "Oh, what a shame, Master Richard! they would have been trout in the summer, please God! if you would only a' let 'em grow on." She is living now, and will bear me out in this.

But upon every great occasion there arises a great

man; or to put it more accurately, in the present instance, a mighty and distinguished boy. My father, being the parson of the parish, and getting, need it be said, small pay, took sundry pupils, very pleasant fellows, about to adorn the universities. Among them was the original "Bude Light," as he was satirically called at Cambridge, for he came from Bude, and there was no light in him. Among them also was John Pike, a born Zebedee, if ever there was one.

John Pike was a thick-set younker, with a large and bushy head, keen blue eyes that could see through water, and the proper slouch of shoulder into which great anglers ripen; but greater still are born with it; and of these was Master John. It mattered little what the weather was, and scarcely more as to the time of year, John Pike must have his fishing every day, and on Sundays he read about it, and made flies. All the rest of the time he was thinking about it.

My father was coaching him in the fourth book of the Æneid and all those wonderful speeches of Dido, where passion disdains construction; but the only line Pike cared for was of horsehair. "I fear, Mr. Pike, that you are not giving me your entire attention," my father used to say in his mild dry way; and once when Pike was more than usually abroad, his tutor begged to share his meditations. "Well, sir," said Pike, who was very truthful, "I can see a green drake by the strawberry tree, the first of the season, and your derivation of 'barbarous' put me in mind of

my barberry dye." In those days it was a very nice point to get the right tint for the mallard's feather.

No sooner was lesson done than Pike, whose rod was ready upon the lawn, dashed away always for the river, rushing headlong down the hill, and away to the left through a private yard, where "no thoroughfare" was put up, and a big dog stationed to enforce it. But Cerberus himself could not have stopped John Pike; his conscience backed him up in trespass the most sinful when his heart was inditing of a trout upon the rise.

All this, however, is preliminary, as the boy said when he put his father's coat upon his grandfather's tenterhooks, with felonious intent upon his grandmother's apples; the main point to be understood is this, that nothing—neither brazen tower, hundred-eyed Argus, nor Cretan Minotaur—could stop John Pike from getting at a good stickle. But, even as the world knows nothing of its greatest men, its greatest men know nothing of the world beneath their very nose, till fortune sneezes dexter. For two years John Pike must have been whipping the water as hard as Xerxes, without having ever once dreamed of the glorious trout that lived in Crocker's Hole. But why, when he ought to have been at least on bowing terms with every fish as long as his middle finger, why had he failed to know this champion? The answer is simple—because of his short cuts. Flying as he did like an arrow from a bow, Pike used to hit his beloved river

at an elbow, some furlong below Crocker's Hole, where a sweet little stickle sailed away down stream, whereas for the length of a meadow upward the water lay smooth, clear, and shallow; therefore the youth, with so little time to spare, rushed into the downward joy.

And here it may be noted that the leading maxim of the present period, that man can discharge his duty only by going counter to the stream, was scarcely mooted in those days. My grandfather (who was a wonderful man, if he was accustomed to fill a cart in two days of fly-fishing on the Barle) regularly fished down stream; and what more than a cartload need anyone put into his basket?

And surely it is more genial and pleasant to behold our friend the river growing and thriving as we go on, strengthening its voice and enlargening its bosom, and sparkling through each successive meadow with richer plenitude of silver, than to trace it against its own grain and good-will toward weakness, and littleness, and immature conceptions.

However, you will say that if John Pike had fished up stream, he would have found this trout much sooner. And that is true; but still, as it was, the trout had more time to grow into such a prize. And the way in which John found him out was this. For some days he had been tormented with a very painful tooth, which even poisoned all the joys of fishing. Therefore he resolved to have it out, and sturdily entered the

shop of John Sweetland, the village blacksmith, and there paid his sixpence. Sweetland extracted the teeth of the village, whenever they required it, in the simplest and most effectual way. A piece of fine wire was fastened round the tooth, and the other end round the anvil's nose, then the sturdy blacksmith shut the lower half of his shop door, which was about breast-high, with the patient outside and the anvil within; a strong push of the foot upset the anvil, and the tooth flew out like a well-thrown fly.

When John Pike had suffered this very bravely, "Ah, Master Pike," said the blacksmith, with a grin, "I reckon you won't pull out thic there big vish,"—the smithy commanded a view of the river,—"clever as you be, quite so peart as thiccy."

"What big fish?" asked the boy, with deepest interest, though his mouth was bleeding fearfully.

"Why that girt mortial of a vish as hath his hover in Crocker's Hole. Zum on 'em saith as a' must be a zammon."

Off went Pike with his handkerchief to his mouth, and after him ran Alec Bolt, one of his fellow-pupils, who had come to the shop to enjoy the extraction.

"Oh, my!" was all that Pike could utter, when by craftily posting himself he had obtained a good view of this grand fish.

"I'll lay you a crown you don't catch him!" cried Bolt, an impatient youth, who scorned angling.

"How long will you give me?" asked the wary Pike, who never made rash wagers.

"Oh! till the holidays if you like; or, if that won't do, till Michaelmas."

Now the midsummer holidays were six weeks off—boys used not to talk of "vacations" then, still less of "recesses."

"I think I'll bet you," said Pike, in his slow way, bending forward carefully, with his keen eyes on this monster; "but it would not be fair to take till Michaelmas. I'll bet you a crown that I catch him before the holidays—at least, unless some other fellow does."

Part II

The day of that most momentous interview must have been the 14th of May. Of the year I will not be so sure; for children take more note of days than of years, for which the latter have their full revenge thereafter. It must have been the 14th, because the morrow was our holiday, given upon the 15th of May, in honour of a birthday.

Now, John Pike was beyond his years wary as well as enterprising, calm as well as ardent, quite as rich in patience as in promptitude and vigour. But Alec Bolt was a headlong youth, volatile, hot, and hasty, fit only to fish the Maëlstrom, or a torrent of new lava. And the moment he had laid that wager he expected his crown piece; though time, as the lawyers phrase

it, was "expressly of the essence of the contract." And now he demanded that Pike should spend the holiday in trying to catch that trout.

"I shall not go near him," that lad replied, "until I have got a new collar." No piece of personal adornment was it, without which he would not act, but rather that which now is called the fly-cast, or the gut-cast, or the trace, or what it may be. "And another thing," continued Pike; "the bet is off if you go near him, either now or at any other time, without asking my leave first, and then only going as I tell you."

"What do I want with the great slimy beggar?" the arrogant Bolt made answer. "A good rat is worth fifty of him. No fear of my going near him, Pike. You shan't get out of it that way."

Pike showed his remarkable qualities that day, by fishing exactly as he would have fished without having heard of the great Crockerite. He was up and away upon the mill-stream before breakfast; and the forenoon he devoted to his favourite course—first down the Craddock stream, a very pretty confluent of the Culm, and from its junction, down the pleasant hams, where the river winds toward Uffculme. It was my privilege to accompany this hero, as his humble Sancho; while Bolt and the faster race went up the river ratting. We were back in time to have Pike's trout (which ranged between two ounces and one-half pound) fried for the early dinner; and here it

may be lawful to remark that the trout of the Culm are of the very purest excellence, by reason of the flinty bottom, at any rate in these the upper regions. For the valley is the western outlet of the Black-down range, with the Beacon hill upon the north, and Hackpen long ridge to the south; and beyond that again the Whetstone hill, upon whose western end dark port-holes scarped with white grit mark the pits. But flint is the staple of the broad Culm Valley, under good, well-pastured loam; and here are chalcedonies and agate stones.

At dinner everybody had a brace of trout—large for the larger folk, little for the little ones, with coughing and some patting on the back for bones. What of equal purport could the fierce rat-hunter show? Pike explained many points in the history of each fish, seeming to know them none the worse, and love them all the better, for being fried. We banqueted, neither a whit did soul get stinted of banquet impartial. Then the wielder of the magic rod very modestly sought leave of absence at the tea time.

"Fishing again, Mr. Pike, I suppose," my father answered pleasantly; "I used to be fond of it at your age; but never so entirely wrapped up in it as you are."

"No, sir; I am not going fishing again. I want to walk to Wellington, to get some things at Cherry's."

"Books, Mr. Pike? Ah! I am very glad of that. But I fear it can only be fly-books."

"I want a little Horace for eighteen-pence—the

Cambridge one just published, to carry in my pocket —and a new hank of gut."

"Which of the two is more important? Put that into Latin, and answer it."

"Utrum pluris facio? Flaccum flocci. Viscera magni." With this vast effort Pike turned as red as any trout spot.

"After that who could refuse you?" said my father. "You always tell the truth, my boy, in Latin or in English."

Although it was a long walk, some fourteen miles to Wellington and back, I got permission to go with Pike; and as we crossed the bridge and saw the tree that overhung Crocker's Hole, I begged him to show me that mighty fish.

"Not a bit of it," he replied. "It would bring the blackguards. If the blackguards once find him out, it is all over with him."

"The blackguards are all in factory now, and I am sure they cannot see us from the windows. They won't be out till five o'clock."

With the true liberality of young England, which abides even now as large and glorious as ever, we always called the free and enlightened operatives of the period by the courteous name above set down, and it must be acknowledged that some of them deserved it, although perhaps they poached with less of science than their sons. But the cowardly murder of fish by liming the water was already prevalent.

Yielding to my request and perhaps his own desire —manfully kept in check that morning—Pike very carefully approached that pool, commanding me to sit down while he reconnoitred from the meadow upon the right bank of the stream. And the place which had so sadly quenched the fire of the poor baker's love filled my childish heart with dread and deep wonder at the cruelty of women. But as for John Pike, all he thought of was the fish and the best way to get at him.

Very likely that hole is "holed out" now, as the Yankees well express it, or at any rate changed out of knowledge. Even in my time a very heavy flood entirely altered its character; but to the eager eye of Pike it seemed pretty much as follows, and possibly it may have come to such a form again:

The river, after passing through a hurdle fence at the head of the meadow, takes a little turn or two of bright and shallow indifference, then gathers itself into a good strong slide, as if going down a slope instead of steps. The right bank is high and beetles over with yellow loam and grassy fringe; but the other side is of flinty shingle, low and bare and washed by floods. At the end of this rapid, the stream turns sharply under an ancient alder tree into a large, deep, calm repose, cool, unruffled, and sheltered from the sun by branch and leaf—and that is the hole of poor Crocker.

At the head of the pool (where the hasty current rushes in so eagerly, with noisy excitement and much

ado) the quieter waters from below, having rested and enlarged themselves, come lapping up round either curve, with some recollection of their past career, the hoary experience of foam. And sidling toward the new arrival of the impulsive column, where they meet it, things go on, which no man can describe without his mouth being full of water. A "V" is formed, a fancy letter V, beyond any designer's tracery, and even beyond his imagination, a perpetually fluctuating limpid wedge, perpetually crenelled and rippled into by little ups and downs that try to make an impress, but can only glide away upon either side or sink in dimples under it. And here a gray bough of the ancient alder stretches across, like a thirsty giant's arm, and makes it a very ticklish place to throw a fly. Yet this was the very spot our John Pike must put his fly into, or lose his crown.

Because the great tenant of Crocker's Hole, who allowed no other fish to wag a fin there, and from strict monopoly had grown so fat, kept his victualing yard —if so low an expression can be used concerning him —within about a square yard of this spot. He had a sweet hover, both for rest and recreation, under the bank, in a placid antre, where the water made no noise, but tickled his belly in digestive ease. The loftier the character is of any being, the slower and more dignified his movements are. No true psychologist could have believed—as Sweetland the blacksmith did, and Mr. Pook the tinman—that this trout could ever be the

embodiment of Crocker. For this was the last trout in the universal world to drown himself for love; if truly any trout has done so.

"You may come now, and try to look along my back," John Pike, with a reverential whisper, said to me. "Now don't be in a hurry, young stupid; kneel down. He is not to be disturbed at his dinner, mind. You keep behind me, and look along my back; I never clapped eyes on such a whopper."

I had to kneel down in a tender reminiscence of pasture land, and gaze carefully; and not having eyes like those of our Zebedee (who offered his spine for a camera, as he crawled on all fours in front of me), it took me a long time to descry an object most distinct to all who have that special gift of piercing with their eyes the water. See what is said upon this subject in that delicious book, "The Gamekeeper at Home."

"You are no better than a muff," said Pike, and it was not in my power to deny it.

"If the sun would only leave off," I said. But the sun, who was having a very pleasant play with the sparkle of the water and the twinkle of the leaves, had no inclination to leave off yet, but kept the rippling crystal in a dance of flashing facets, and the quivering verdure in a steady flush of gold.

But suddenly a May-fly, a luscious gray-drake, richer and more delicate than canvas-back or woodcock, with a dart and a leap and a merry zigzag, began

to enjoy a little game above the stream. Rising and falling like a gnat, thrilling her gauzy wings, and arching her elegant pellucid frame, every now and then she almost dipped her three long tapering whisks into the dimples of the water.

"He sees her! He'll have her as sure as a gun!" cried Pike, with a gulp, as if he himself were "rising." "Now, can you see him, stupid?"

"Crikey, crokums!" I exclaimed, with classic elegance; "I have seen that long thing for five minutes; but I took it for a tree."

"You little"—animal quite early in the alphabet—"now don't you stir a peg, or I'll dig my elbow into you."

The great trout was stationary almost as a stone, in the middle of the "V" above described. He was gently fanning with his large clear fins, but holding his own against the current mainly by the wagging of his broad-fluked tail. As soon as my slow eyes had once defined him, he grew upon them mightily, moulding himself in the matrix of the water, as a thing put into jelly does. And I doubt whether even John Pike saw him more accurately than I did. His size was such, or seemed to be such, that I fear to say a word about it; not because language does not contain the word, but from dread of exaggeration. But his shape and colour may be reasonably told without wounding the feeling of an age whose incredulity springs from self-knowledge.

His head was truly small, his shoulders vast; the spring of his back was like a rainbow when the sun is southing; the generous sweep of his deep elastic belly, nobly pulped out with rich nurture, showed what the power of his brain must be, and seemed to undulate, time for time, with the vibrant vigilance of his large wise eyes. His latter end was consistent also. An elegant taper run of counter, coming almost to a cylinder, as a mackerel does, boldly developed with a hugeous spread to a glorious amplitude of swallow-tail. His colour was all that can well be desired, but ill-described by any poor word-palette. Enough that he seemed to tone away from olive and umber, with carmine stars, to glowing gold and soft pure silver, mantled with a subtle flush of rose and fawn and opal.

Swoop came a swallow, as we gazed, and was gone with a flick, having missed the May-fly. But the wind of his passage, or the skir of wing, struck the merry dancer down, so that he fluttered for one instant on the wave, and that instant was enough. Swift as the swallow, and more true of aim, the great trout made one dart, and a sound, deeper than a tinkle, but as silvery as a bell, rang the poor ephemerid's knell. The rapid water scarcely showed a break; but a bubble sailed down the pool, and the dark hollow echoed with the music of a rise.

"He knows how to take a fly," said Pike; "he has had too many to be tricked with mine. Have him I must; but how ever shall I do it?"

All the way to Wellington he uttered not a word, but shambled along with a mind full of care. When I ventured to look up now and then, to surmise what was going on beneath his hat, deeply-set eyes and a wrinkled forehead, relieved at long intervals by a solid shake, proved that there are meditations deeper than those of philosopher or statesman.

Part III

Surely no trout could have been misled by the artificial May-fly of that time, unless he were either a very young fish, quite new to entomology, or else one afflicted with a combination of myopy and bulimy. Even now there is room for plenty of improvement in our counterfeit presentment; but in those days the body was made with yellow mohair, ribbed with red silk and gold twist, and as thick as a fertile bumble-bee. John Pike perceived that to offer such a thing to Crocker's trout would probably consign him—even if his great stamina should overget the horror—to an uneatable death, through just and natural indignation. On the other hand, while the May-fly lasted, a trout so cultured, so highly refined, so full of light and sweetness, would never demean himself to low bait, or any coarse son of a maggot.

Meanwhile Alec Bolt allowed poor Pike no peaceful thought, no calm absorption of high mind into the world of flies, no placid period of cobblers' wax, floss-

silk, turned hackles, and dubbing. For in making of flies John Pike had his special moments of inspiration, times of clearer insight into the everlasting verities, times of brighter conception and more subtle execution, tails of more elastic grace and heads of a neater and nattier expression. As a poet labours at one immortal line, compressing worlds of wisdom into the music of ten syllables, so toiled the patient Pike about the fabric of a fly comprising all the excellence that ever sprang from maggot. Yet Bolt rejoiced to jerk his elbow at the moment of sublimest art. And a swarm of flies was blighted thus.

Peaceful, therefore, and long-suffering, and full of resignation as he was, John Pike came slowly to the sad perception that arts avail not without arms. The elbow, so often jerked, at last took a voluntary jerk from the shoulder, and Alec Bolt lay prostrate, with his right eye full of cobbler's wax. This put a desirable check upon his energies for a week or more, and by that time Pike had flown his fly.

When the honeymoon of spring and summer (which they are now too fashionable to celebrate in this country), the hey-day of the whole year marked by the budding of the wild rose, the start of the wheat-ear from its sheath, the feathering of the lesser plantain, and flowering of the meadowsweet, and, foremost for the angler's joy, the caracole of May-flies—when these things are to be seen and felt (which has not happened at all this year), then rivers should be

mild and bright, skies blue and white with fleecy cloud, the west wind blowing softly, and the trout in charming appetite.

On such a day came Pike to the bank of Culm, with a loudly beating heart. A fly there is, not ignominious, or of cowdab origin, neither gross and heavy-bodied, from cradlehood of slimy stones, nor yet of menacing aspect and suggesting deeds of poison, but elegant, bland, and of sunny nature, and obviously good to eat. Him or her—why quest we which?—the shepherd of the dale, contemptuous of gender, except in his own species, has called, and as long as they two coexist will call, the "Yellow Sally." A fly that does not waste the day in giddy dances and the fervid waltz, but undergoes family incidents with decorum and discretion. He or she, as the case may be,—for the natural history of the river bank is a book to come hereafter, and of fifty men who make flies not one knows the name of the fly he is making,—in the early morning of June, or else in the second quarter of the afternoon, this Yellow Sally fares abroad, with a nice well-ordered flutter.

Despairing of the May-fly, as it still may be despaired of, Pike came down to the river with his master-piece of portraiture. The artificial Yellow Sally is generally always—as they say in Cheshire—a mile or more too yellow. On the other hand, the "Yellow Dun" conveys no idea of any Sally. But Pike had made a very decent Sally, not perfect (for he was young as

well as wise), but far above any counterfeit to be had in fishing-tackle shops. How he made it, he told nobody. But if he lives now, as I hope he does, any of my readers may ask him through the G. P. O., and hope to get an answer.

It fluttered beautifully on the breeze, and in such living form, that a brother or sister Sally came up to see it, and went away sadder and wiser. Then Pike said: "Get away, you young wretch," to your humble servant who tells this tale; yet being better than his words, allowed that pious follower to lie down upon his digestive organs and with deep attention watch. There must have been great things to see, but to see them so was difficult. And if I huddle up what happened, excitement also shares the blame.

Pike had fashioned well the time and manner of this overture. He knew that the giant Crockerite was satiate now with May-flies, or began to find their flavour failing, as happens to us with asparagus, marrow-fat peas, or strawberries, when we have had a month of them. And he thought that the first Yellow Sally of the season, inferior though it were, might have the special charm of novelty. With the skill of a Zulu, he stole up through the branches over the lower pool till he came to a spot where a yard-wide opening gave just space for spring of rod. Then he saw his desirable friend at dinner, wagging his tail, as a hungry gentleman dining with the Lord Mayor agitates his coat. With one dexterous whirl, untaught by any of

the many books upon the subject, John Pike laid his Yellow Sally (for he cast with one fly only) as lightly as gossamer upon the rapid, about a yard in front of the big trout's head. A moment's pause, and then, too quick for words, was the thing that happened.

A heavy plunge was followed by a fearful rush. Forgetful of current the river was ridged, as if with a plough driven under it; the strong line, though given out as fast as might be, twanged like a harp-string as it cut the wave, and then Pike stood up, like a ship dismasted, with the butt of his rod snapped below the ferrule. He had one of those foolish things, just invented, a hollow butt of hickory; and the finial ring of his spare top looked out, to ask what had happened to the rest of it. "Bad luck!" cried the fisherman; "but never mind, I shall have him next time, to a certainty."

When this great issue came to be considered, the cause of it was sadly obvious. The fish, being hooked, had made off with the rush of a shark for the bottom of the pool. A thicket of saplings below the alder tree had stopped the judicious hooker from all possibility of following; and when he strove to turn him by elastic pliance, his rod broke at the breach of pliability. "I have learned a sad lesson," said John Pike, looking sadly.

How many fellows would have given up this matter, and glorified themselves for having hooked so grand a fish, while explaining that they must have caught him, if they could have done it! But Pike only

told me not to say a word about it, and began to make ready for another tug of war. He made himself a splice-rod, short and handy, of well-seasoned ash, with a stout top of bamboo, tapered so discreetly, and so balanced in its spring, that verily it formed an arc, with any pressure on it, as perfect as a leafy poplar in a stormy summer. "Now break it if you can," he said, "by any amount of rushes; I'll hook you by your jacket collar; you cut away now, and I'll land you."

This was highly skilful, and he did it many times; and whenever I was landed well, I got a lollypop, so that I was careful not to break his tackle. Moreover he made him a landing net, with a kidney-bean stick, a ring of wire, and his own best nightcap of strong cotton net. Then he got the farmer's leave, and lopped obnoxious bushes; and now the chiefest question was: what bait, and when to offer it? In spite of his sad rebuff, the spirit of John Pike had been equable. The genuine angling mind is steadfast, large, and self-supported, and to the vapid, ignominious chaff, tossed by swine upon the idle wind, it pays as much heed as a big trout does to a dance of midges. People put their fingers to their noses and said: "Master Pike, have you caught him yet?" and Pike only answered: "Wait a bit." If ever this fortitude and perseverence is to be recovered as the English Brand (the one thing that has made us what we are, and may yet redeem us from niddering shame), a degenerate age should encourage the habit of fishing and never despairing. And the

brightest sign yet for our future is the increasing demand for hooks and gut.

Pike fished in a manlier age, when nobody would dream of cowering from a savage because he was clever at skulking; and when, if a big fish broke the rod, a stronger rod was made for him, according to the usage of Great Britain. And though the young angler had been defeated, he did not sit down and have a good cry over it.

About the second week in June, when the May-fly had danced its day, and died,—for the season was an early one,—and Crocker's trout had recovered from the wound to his feelings and philanthropy, there came a night of gentle rain, of pleasant tinkling upon window ledges, and a soothing patter among young leaves, and the Culm was yellow in the morning. "I mean to do it this afternoon," Pike whispered to me, as he came back panting. "When the water clears there will be a splendid time."

The lover of the rose knows well a gay voluptuous beetle, whose pleasure is to lie embedded in a fount of beauty. Deep among the incurving petals of the blushing fragrance, he loses himself in his joys sometimes, till a breezy waft reveals him. And when the sunlight breaks upon his luscious dissipation, few would have the heart to oust him, such a gem from such a setting. All his back is emerald sparkles; all his front red Indian gold, and here and there he grows white spots to save the eye from aching. Pike put his

finger in and fetched him out, and offered him a little change of joys, by putting a Limerick hook through his thorax, and bringing it out between his elytra. *Cetonia aurata* liked it not, but pawed the air very naturally, and fluttered with his wings attractively.

"I meant to have tried with a fern-web," said the angler; "until I saw one of these beggars this morning. If he works like that upon the water, he will do. It was hopeless to try artificials again. What a lovely colour the water is! Only three days now to the holidays. I have run it very close. You be ready, younker."

With these words he stepped upon a branch of the alder, for the tone of the waters allowed approach, being soft and sublustrous, without any mud. Also Master Pike's own tone was such as becomes the fisherman, calm, deliberate, free from nerve, but full of eye and muscle. He stepped upon the alder bough to get as near as might be to the fish, for he could not cast this beetle like a fly; it must be dropped gently and allowed to play. "You may come and look," he said to me; "when the water is so, they have no eyes in their tails."

The rose-beetle trod upon the water prettily, under a lively vibration, and he looked quite as happy, and considerably more active, than when he had been cradled in the anthers of the rose. To the eye of a fish he was a strong individual, fighting courageously with the current, but sure to be beaten through lack of fins;

and mercy suggested, as well as appetite, that the proper solution was to gulp him.

"Hooked him in the gullet. He can't get off!" cried John Pike, labouring to keep his nerves under; "every inch of tackle is as strong as a bell-pull. Now, if I don't land him, I will never fish again!"

Providence, which had constructed Pike, foremost of all things, for lofty angling—disdainful of worm and even minnow—Providence, I say, at this adjuration, pronounced that Pike must catch that trout. Not many anglers are heaven-born; and for one to drop off the hook halfway through his teens would be infinitely worse than to slay the champion trout. Pike felt the force of this, and rushing through the rushes, shouted: "I am sure to have him, Dick! Be ready with my night-cap."

Rod in a bow, like a springle-riser; line on the hum, like the string of Paganini; winch on the gallop, like a harpoon wheel, Pike, the head-centre of everything, dashing through thick and thin, and once taken over-head—for he jumped into the hole, when he must have lost him else, but the fish too impetuously towed him out, and made off in passion for another pool, when, if he had only retired to his hover, the angler might have shared the baker's fate—all these things (I tell you, for they all come up again, as if the day were yesterday) so scared me of my never very steadfast wits, that I could only holloa! But one thing I did, I kept the nightcap ready.

"He is pretty nearly spent, I do believe," said Pike; and his voice was like balm of Gilead, as we came to Farmer Anning's meadow, a quarter of a mile below Crocker's Hole. "Take it coolly, my dear boy, and we shall be safe to have him."

Never have I felt, through forty years, such tremendous responsibility. I had not the faintest notion how to use a landing net; but a mighty general directed me. "Don't let him see it; don't let him see it! Don't clap it over him; go under him, you stupid! If he makes another rush, he will get off, after all. Bring it up his tail. Well done! You have him!"

The mighty trout lay in the nightcap of Pike, which was half a fathom long, with a tassel at the end, for his mother had made it in the winter evenings. "Come and hold the rod, if you can't lift him," my master shouted, and so I did. Then, with both arms straining, and his mouth wide open, John Pike made a mighty sweep, and we both fell upon the grass and rolled, with the giant of the deep flapping heavily between us, and no power left to us, except to cry, "Hurrah!"

OL' SETTLER OF DEEP HOLE

by Irving Bacheller

UNCLE EB WAS A BORN LOVER OF FUN. BUT HE HAD A solemn way of fishing that was no credit to a cheerful man. It was the same when he played the bass viol, but that was also a kind of fishing at which he tried his luck in a roaring torrent of sound. Both forms of dissipation gave him a serious look and manner, that came near severity. They brought on his face only the light of hope and anticipation or the shadow of disappointment.

We had finished our stent early the day of which I am writing. When we had dug our worms and were on our way to the brook with pole and line a squint of elation had hold of Uncle Eb's face. Long wrinkles deepened as he looked into the sky for a sign of the weather, and then relaxed a bit as he turned his eyes upon the smooth sward. It was no time for idle talk. We tiptoed over the leafy carpet of the woods. Soon as I spoke he lifted his hand with a warning "Sh—h!"

The murmur of the stream was in our ears. Kneeling on a mossy knoll we baited the hooks; then Uncle Eb beckoned to me.

I came to him on tiptoe.

"See thet there foam 'long side o' the big log?" he whispered, pointing with his finger.

I nodded.

"Cre-e-ep up jest as ca-a-areful as ye can," he went on whispering. "Drop in a leetle above an' let 'er float down."

Then he went on, below me, lifting his feet in slow and stealthy strides.

He halted by a bit of drift wood and cautiously threw in, his arm extended, his figure alert. The squint on his face took a firmer grip. Suddenly his pole gave a leap, the water splashed, his line sang in the air and a fish went up like a rocket. As we were looking into the tree tops it thumped the shore beside him, quivered a moment and flopped down the bank. He scrambled after it and went to his knees in the brook coming up empty handed. The water was slopping out of his boot legs.

"Whew!" said he, panting with excitement, as I came over to him. "Reg'lar ol' he one," he added, looking down at his boots. "Got away from me—consarn him! Hed a leetle too much power in the arm."

He emptied his boots, baited up and went back to his fishing. As I looked up at him he stood leaning over the stream jiggling his hook. In a moment I saw a tug

at the line. The end of his pole went under water like a flash. It bent double as Uncle Eb gave it a lift. The fish began to dive and rush. The line cut the water in a broad semicircle and then went far and near with long, quick slashes. The pole nodded and writhed like a thing of life. Then Uncle Eb had a look on him that is one of the treasures of my memory. In a moment the fish went away with such a violent rush, to save him, he had to throw his pole into the water.

"Heavens an' airth!" he shouted, "the ol' settler!"

The pole turned quickly and went lengthwise into the rapids. He ran down the bank and I after him. The pole was speeding through the swift water. We scrambled over logs and through bushes, but the pole went faster than we. Presently it stopped and swung around. Uncle Eb went splashing into the brook. Almost within reach of the pole he dashed his foot upon a stone falling headlong in the current. I was close upon his heels and gave him a hand. He rose hatless, dripping from head to foot and pressed on. He lifted his pole. The line clung to a snag and then gave way; the tackle was missing. He looked at it silently, tilting his head. We walked slowly to the shore. Neither spoke for a moment.

"Must have been a big fish," I remarked.

"Powerful!" said he, chewing vigorously on his quid of tobacco as he shook his head and looked down at his wet clothing. "In a desp'rit fix aint I?"

"Too bad!" I exclaimed.

"Seldom ever hed sech a disapp'intment," he said. "Ruther counted on ketchin' thet fish—he was s' well hooked."

He looked longingly at the water a moment. "If I don't go hum," said he, "an' keep my mouth shet I'll say sumthin' I'll be sorry fer."

He was never quite the same after that. He told often of his struggle with this unseen, mysterious fish and I imagined he was a bit more given to reflection. He had had hold of the "ol' settler of Deep Hole,"—a fish of great influence and renown there in Faraway. Most of the local fishermen had felt him tug at the line one time or another. No man had ever seen him for the water was black in Deep Hole. No fish had ever exerted a greater influence on the thought, the imagination, the manners or the moral character of his contemporaries. Tip Taylor always took off his hat and sighed when he spoke of the "ol' settler." Ransom Walker said he had once seen his top fin and thought it longer than a razor. Ransom took to idleness and chewing tobacco immediately after his encounter with the big fish, and both vices stuck to him as long as he lived. Everyone had his theory of the "ol' settler." Most agreed he was a very heavy trout. Tip Taylor used to say that in his opinion " 'twas nuthin' more'n a plain, overgrown, common sucker," but Tip came from the Sucker Brook country where suckers lived in colder water and were more entitled to respect.

Mose Tupper had never had his hook in the "ol' settler" and would believe none of the many stories of adventure at Deep Hole that had thrilled the township.

"Thet fish hes made s' many liars 'round here ye dunno who t' b'lieve," he had said at the corners one day, after Uncle Eb had told his story of the big fish. "Somebody 't knows how t' fish hed oughter go'n ketch him fer the good o' the town—thet's what I think."

Now Mr. Tupper was an excellent man but his incredulity was always too bluntly put. It had even led to some ill feeling.

He came in at our place one evening with a big hook and line from "down east"—the kind of tackle used in salt water.

"What ye goin' t' dew with it?" Uncle Eb inquired.

"Ketch thet fish ye talk s' much about—goin' t' put him out o' the way."

" 'Taint fair," said Uncle Eb, "its reedic'lous. Like leading a pup with a log chain."

"Don't care," said Mose, "I'm goin' t' go fishin' t' morrer. If there reely is any sech fish—which I don't believe there is—I'm goin' t' rassle with him an' mebbe tek him out o' the river. Thet fish is sp'ilin' the moral character o' this town. He oughter be rode on a rail —thet fish hed."

How he would punish a trout in that manner Mr. Tupper failed to explain, but his metaphor was always

a worse fit than his trousers and that was bad enough.

It was just before haying and, there being little to do, we had also planned to try our luck in the morning. When, at sunrise, we were walking down the cow path to the woods I saw Uncle Eb had a coil of bed cord on his shoulder.

"What's that for?" I asked.

"Wall," said he, "goin' t' hev fun anyway. If we can't ketch one thing we'll try another."

We had great luck that morning and when our basket was near full we came to Deep Hole and made ready for a swim in the water above it. Uncle Eb had looped an end of the bed cord and tied a few pebbles on it with bits of string.

"Now," said he presently, "I want t' sink this loop t' the bottom an' pass the end o' the cord under the drift wood so 't we can fetch it 'crost under water."

There was a big stump, just opposite, with roots running down the bank into the stream. I shoved the line under the drift with a pole and then hauled it across where Uncle Eb drew it up the bank under the stump roots.

"In 'bout half an hour I cal'late Mose Tupper 'll be 'long," he whispered. "Wisht ye'd put on yer clo's an' lay here back o' the stump an' hold on t' the cord. When ye feel a bite give a yank er two an' haul in like Sam Hill—fifteen feet er more quicker'n scat. Snatch his pole right away from him. Then lay still."

Uncle Eb left me, shortly, going up stream. It was

near an hour before I heard them coming. Uncle Eb was talking in a low tone as they came down the other bank.

"Drop right in there," he was saying, "an' let her drag down, through the deep water, deliberate like. Git clus t' the bottom."

Peering through a screen of bushes I could see an eager look on the unlovely face of Moses. He stood leaning toward the water and jiggling his hook along the bottom. Suddenly I saw Mose jerk and felt the cord move. I gave it a double twitch and began to pull. He held hard for a jiffy and then stumbled and let go yelling like mad. The pole hit the water with a splash and went out of sight like a diving frog. I brought it well under the foam and drift wood. Deep Hole resumed its calm, unruffled aspect. Mose went running toward Uncle Eb.

" 'S a whale!" he shouted. "Ripped the pole away quicker'n lightnin'."

"Where is it?" Uncle Eb asked.

"Tuk it away f'm me," said Moses. "Grabbed it jes' like thet," he added with a violent jerk of his hand.

"What d' he dew with it?" Uncle Eb inquired.

Mose looked thoughtfully at the water and scratched his head, his features all a tremble.

"Dunno," said he. "Swallered it mebbe."

"Mean t' say ye lost hook, line, sinker 'n pole?"

"Hook, line, sinker 'n pole," he answered mournfully. "Come nigh haulin' me in tew."

" 'Taint possible," said Uncle Eb.

Mose expectorated, his hands upon his hips, looking down at the water.

"Wouldn't eggzac'ly say 'twas possible," he drawled, "but 'twas a fact."

"Yer mistaken," said Uncle Eb.

"No I haint," was the answer, "I tell ye I see it."

"Then if ye see it the nex' thing ye orter see 's a doctor. There's sumthin' wrong with you sumwheres."

"Only one thing the matter o' me," said Mose with a little twinge of remorse. "I'm jest a natural born perfec' dum fool. Never c'u'd b'lieve there *was* any sech fish."

"Nobody ever said there was any *sech* fish," said Uncle Eb. "He's done more t' you 'n he ever done t' me. Never served me no sech trick as thet. If I was you I'd never ask nobody t' b'lieve it. 'S a leetle tew much."

Mose went slowly and picked up his hat. Then he returned to the bank and looked regretfully at the water.

"Never see the beat o' thet," he went on. "Never see sech power 'n a fish. Knocks the spots off any fish I ever hearn of."

"Ye riled him with that big tackle o' yourn," said Uncle Eb. "He wouldn't stan' it."

"Feel jest as if I'd hed holt uv a wil' cat," said Mose. "Tuk the hull thing—pole an' all—quicker 'n lightnin'. Nice a bit o' hickory as a man ever see. Gol' durned if I ever hearn o' the like o' that, *ever*."

He sat down a moment on the bank.

"Got t' rest a minute," he remarked. "Feel kind o' wopsy after thet squabble."

They soon went away. And when Mose told the story of "the swallered pole" he got the same sort of reputation he had given to others. Only it was real and large and lasting.

"Wha' d' ye think uv it?" he asked, when he had finished.

"Wall," said Ransom Walker, "wouldn't want t' say right out plain t' yer face."

" 'Twouldn't be p'lite," said Uncle Eb soberly.

"Sound a leetle ha'sh," Tip Taylor added.

"Thet fish has jerked the fear o' God out o' ye—thet's the way it looks t' me," said Carlyle Barber.

"Yer up 'n the air, Mose," said another. "Need a sinker on ye."

They bullied him—they talked him down, demurring mildly, but firmly.

"Tell ye what I'll do," said Mose sheepishly, "I'll b'lieve you fellers if you'll b'lieve me."

"What, swop even? Not much!" said one, with emphasis. " 'Twouldn't be fair. Ye've ast us t' b'lieve a genuwine out 'n out *im*possibility."

Mose lifted his hat and scratched his head thoughtfully. There was a look of embarrassment in his face.

"Might a ben dreamin'," said he slowly. "I swear it's gittin' so here 'n this town a feller can't hardly b'lieve himself."

"Fur 's my experience goes," said Ransom Walker, "he'd be a fool 'f he did."

" 'Minds me o' the time I went fishin' with Ab Thomas," said Uncle Eb. "He ketched an ol' socker the fust thing. I went off by myself 'n got a good sized fish, but 'twant s' big 's hisn. So I tuk 'n opened his mouth 'n poured in a lot o' fine shot. When I come back Ab he looked at my fish 'n begun t' brag. When we weighed 'em mine was a leetle heavier.

" 'What!' says he, ' 'Taint possible thet leetle cuss uv a trout's heavier 'n mine.'

" ' 'Tis sartin,' I said.

" ' Dummed deceivin' business,' said he as he hefted 'em both. 'Gittin' so ye can't hardly b'lieve the still-yurds.' "

BYME–BY–TARPON

by Zane Grey

To capture the fish is not all of the fishing. yet there are circumstances which make this philosophy hard to accept. I have in mind an incident of angling tribulation which rivals the most poignant instant of my boyhood, when a great trout flopped for one sharp moment on a mossy stone and then was gone like a golden flash into the depths of the pool.

Some years ago I followed Attalano, my guide, down the narrow Mexican street of Tampico to the bank of the broad Panuco. Under the rosy dawn the river quivered like a restless opal. The air, sweet with the song of blackbird and meadowlark, was full of cheer; the rising sun shone in splendor on the water and the long line of graceful palms lining the opposite bank, and the tropical forest beyond, with its luxuriant foliage festooned by gray moss. Here was a day to warm the heart of any fisherman; here was the

beautiful river, celebrated in many a story; here was the famous guide, skilled with oar and gaff, rich in experience. What sport I would have; what treasure of keen sensation would I store; what flavor of life would I taste this day! Hope burns always in the heart of a fisherman.

Attalano was in harmony with the day and the scene. He had a cheering figure, lithe and erect, with a springy stride, bespeaking the Montezuma blood said to flow in his Indian veins. Clad in a colored cotton shirt, blue jeans, and Spanish girdle, and treading the path with brown feet never deformed by shoes, he would have stopped an artist. Soon he bent his muscular shoulders to the oars, and the ripples circling from each stroke hardly disturbed the calm Panuco. Down the stream glided long Indian canoes, hewn from trees and laden with oranges and bananas. In the stern stood a dark native wielding an enormous paddle with ease. Wild-fowl dotted the glassy expanse; white cranes and pink flamingoes graced the reedy bars; red-breasted kingfishers flew over with friendly screech. The salt breeze kissed my cheek; the sun shone with the comfortable warmth Northerners welcome in spring; from over the white sand-dunes far below came the faint boom of the ever-restless Gulf.

We trolled up the river and down, across from one rush-lined lily-padded shore to the other, for miles and miles with never a strike. But I was content, for

over me had been cast the dreamy, care-dispelling languor of the South.

When the first long, low swell of the changing tide rolled in, a stronger breeze raised little dimpling waves and chased along the water in dark, quick-moving frowns. All at once the tarpon began to show, to splash, to play, to roll. It was as though they had been awakened by the stir and murmur of the miniature breakers. Broad bars of silver flashed in the sunlight, green backs cleft the little billows, wide tails slapped lazily on the water. Every yard of river seemed to hold a rolling fish. This sport increased until the long stretch of water, which had been as calm as St. Regis Lake at twilight, resembled the quick current of a Canadian stream. It was a fascinating, wonderful sight. But it was also peculiarly exasperating, because when the fish roll in this sportive, lazy way they will not bite. For an hour I trolled through this whirlpool of flying spray and twisting tarpon, with many a salty drop on my face, hearing all around me the whipping crash of breaking water.

"Byme-by-tarpon," presently remarked Attalano, favoring me with the first specimen of his English.

The rolling of the tarpon diminished, and finally ceased as noon advanced.

No more did I cast longing eyes upon those huge bars of silver. They were buried treasure. The breeze quickened as the flowing tide gathered strength, and

together they drove the waves higher. Attalano rowed across the river into the outlet of one of the lagoons. This narrow stream was unruffled by wind; its current was sluggish and its muddy waters were clarifying under the influence of the now fast-rising tide.

By a sunken log near shore we rested for lunch. I found the shade of the trees on the bank rather pleasant, and became interested in a blue heron, a russet-colored duck, and a brown-and-black snipe, all sitting on the sunken log. Near by stood a tall crane watching us solemnly, and above in the treetop a parrot vociferously proclaimed his knowledge of our presence. I was wondering if he objected to our invasion, at the same time taking a most welcome bite for lunch, when directly in front of me the water flew up as if propelled by some submarine power. Framed in a shower of spray I saw an immense tarpon, with mouth agape and fins stiff, close in pursuit of frantically leaping little fish.

The fact that Attalano dropped his sandwich attested to the large size and close proximity of the tarpon. He uttered a grunt of satisfaction and pushed out the boat. A school of feeding tarpon closed the mouth of the lagoon. Thousands of mullet had been cut off from their river haunts and were now leaping, flying, darting in wild haste to elude the great white monsters. In the foamy swirls I saw streaks of blood.

"Byme-by-tarpon!" called Attalano, warningly.

Shrewd guide! I had forgotten that I held a rod.

When the realization dawned on me that sooner or later I would feel the strike of one of these silver tigers a keen, tingling thrill of excitement quivered over me. The primitive man asserted himself; the instinctive lust to conquer and to kill seized me, and I leaned forward, tense and strained with suspended breath and swelling throat.

Suddenly the strike came, so tremendous in its energy that it almost pulled me from my seat; so quick, fierce, bewildering that I could think of nothing but to hold on. Then the water split with a hissing sound to let out a great tarpon, long as a door, seemingly as wide, who shot up and up into the air. He wagged his head and shook it like a struggling wolf. When he fell back with a heavy splash, a rainbow, exquisitely beautiful and delicate, stood out of the spray, glowed, paled, and faded.

Five times he sprang toward the blue sky, and as many he plunged down with a thunderous crash. The reel screamed. The line sang. The rod, which I had thought stiff as a tree, bent like a willow wand. The silver king came up far astern and sheered to the right in a long, wide curve, leaving behind a white wake. Then he sounded, while I watched the line with troubled eyes. But not long did he sulk. He began a series of magnificent tactics new in my experience. He stood on his tail, then on his head; he sailed like a bird; he shook himself so violently as to make a convulsive, shuffling sound; he dove, to come up covered

with mud, marring his bright sides; he closed his huge gills with a slap and, most remarkable of all, he rose in the shape of a crescent, to straighten out with such marvelous power that he seemed to actually crack like a whip.

After this performance, which left me in a condition of mental aberration, he sounded again, to begin a persistent, dragging pull which was the most disheartening of all his maneuvers; for he took yard after yard of line until he was far away from me, out in the Panuco. We followed him, and for an hour crossed to and fro, up and down, humoring him, responding to his every caprice, as if he verily were a king. At last, with a strange inconsistency more human than fishlike, he returned to the scene of his fatal error, and here in the mouth of the smaller stream he leaped once more. But it was only a ghost of his former efforts—a slow, weary rise, showing he was tired. I could see it in the weakening wag of his head. He no longer made the line whistle.

I began to recover the long line. I pumped and reeled him closer. Reluctantly he came, not yet broken in spirit, though his strength had sped. He rolled at times with a shade of the old vigor, with a pathetic manifestation of the temper that became a hero. I could see the long, slender tip of his dorsal fin, then his broad tail and finally the gleam of his silver side. Closer he came and slowly circled around the boat, eying me with great, accusing eyes. I measured him with a

fisherman's glance. What a great fish! Seven feet, I calculated, at the very least.

At this triumphant moment I made a horrible discovery. About six feet from the leader the strands of the line had frayed, leaving only one thread intact. My blood ran cold and the clammy sweat broke out on my brow. My empire was not won; my first tarpon was as if he had never been. But true to my fishing instincts, I held on morosely; tenderly I handled him; with brooding care I riveted my eye on the frail place in my line, and gently, ever so gently, I began to lead the silver king shoreward. Every smallest move of his tail meant disaster to me, so when he moved it I let go of the reel. Then I would have to coax him to swim back again.

The boat touched the bank. I stood up and carefully headed my fish toward the shore, and slid his head and shoulders out on the lily-pads. One moment he lay there, glowing like mother-of-pearl, a rare fish, fresh from the sea. Then, as Attalano warily reached for the leader, he gave a gasp, a flop that deluged us with muddy water, and a lunge that spelled freedom.

I watched him swim slowly away with my bright leader dragging beside him. Is it not the loss of things which makes life bitter? What we have gained is ours; what is lost is gone, whether fish, or use, or love, or name, or fame.

I tried to put on a cheerful aspect for my guide. But it was too soon. Attalano, wise old fellow, under-

stood my case. A smile, warm and living, flashed across his dark face as he spoke:

"Byme-by-tarpon."

Which defined his optimism and revived the failing spark within my breast. It was, too, in the nature of a prophecy.

TROUT FISHING

by W. C. Prime

THERE ARE SEVERAL GRAND TROUT STREAMS, ABOUT twenty miles from us, among the hills, and fortunately they are so inaccessible and so little known, that hardly anyone disturbs our monopoly of the angling. We drive out to a friend's place, which is near the principal stream, and taking him with us, we three form a pleasant party for a day's sport.

Jacob Small is an enormous man. Two hundred and fifty is a moderate estimate of his weight. He lives in a farm-house on the edge of the hill country, where the stream breaks out into the plains and sweeps away in lordly style to the bosom of the great river.

His farm-house is large, and filled with the luxuries of the country, which his acres have furnished; and, with a moderate income to sustain his experimental farming, he manages to be a country gentleman in every acceptation of the term. A good, warm heart,

has Jacob Small, and a liberal hand to the poor around him. The mountaineers in his neighborhood would starve in the winter snows, if his farm were not at the foot of the pass, and his door always open to the needy.

It was a cool, soft morning, in the middle of spring. The stars were bright and clear, so that you expected to feel frost in the atmosphere and were surprised when you stepped out into the air to find it as soft and balmy as a June mid-day. Such an air promised a good day, and, for the water that we proposed to whip, it was preferable to have clear sunshine rather than clouds or rain.

The horses stood at the door, before the box wagon, which has no springs, and rattles musically over mountain roads. A bag of oats and a bundle of hay in the wagon, and our rods, which had been carefully examined the evening previous, were standing just within the great hall door, so that we took them as we came out.

"Philip," said Joseph, "take the reins if you please, while I light a cigar. I must have slept too soundly; my eyes are sadly unwilling to open."

"Look up at that sky, Joe, and your eyes will open."

In the east, where the dawn was to come, a star, bright as an angel's eye, was gleaming from the midst of rays of light streaming up over the hills. The scene was enough to rouse one who had no love for the beautiful; and, to as keen an observer as my friend, and as fine appreciation as he possesses, such a morn-

ing, and such a coming day, were invigorating beyond all physical appliances.

So I took the reins, and the grays sprang off from the hard gravel before the door, and went down the avenue as if they were trout lovers themselves, and knew that Jacob Small was expecting them.

Before six o'clock, we drove up to Jacob's great gate, which was opened for us by a passing laborer, and rattling around the corner of the house, we woke him with a shout under his window.

"Why Jacob—Jacob Small, man—where are you this fine morning—and didn't you know we were coming out? I sent you word by Thompson a week ago."

"Deuce take Thompson!" muttered a voice in the room, which we could hear through the open window, close to which we sat in the wagon. "I say, Philip, did you send me any word by Thompson, last week?"

"Of course I did, Jacob."

"Of course you did. Thompson never gets drunk, except when he has some message for me. He stopped at the cross-roads on his way up, drank all the afternoon with some of those scoundrels there, started for here in the evening, drove his team off the longbridge, and lost a barrel of molasses, besides nearly killing a horse."

"And what became of Thompson?"

"Deuce take Thompson—just like him—he broke his neck—no, his back—no, his ribs, or his legs, or

something of the sort. The doctor knows what it is: I don't."

"The doctor! What doctor?"

"Doctor Wilson, of course. I sent an express off after him, and have had him here every other day. But what word did you send me by Thompson? Deuce take Thompson, I say."

"Never mind the word, Jacob; but if you are dressed, come along to the brook. We want some trout for dinner to-morrow; and we are off for the day."

"All right, Joseph; wait a minute, and I'm with you. But let me send Thompson his gruel."

"Where is he, Jacob?"

"Upstairs, to be sure."

Jacob attended to the sick man about whom he was so indignant, and mingled his kindness with scolding, in very fair proportions, as we could hear, while we sat in the wagon.

At length he came out, puffing and groaning with his haste; one hand being occupied in a successful endeavor to penetrate the lining of an old sporting coat instead of the sleeve, while the whole man seemed intent on holding fast under his left arm a case containing his rod and gun. A little negro boy followed him, chuckling and lugging a huge basket, which Jacob lifted into the wagon. He then tumbled in, and deposited himself between Joe and myself, thus forcing each of us into about half of his natural size, and exclaimed, "Drive on Joe, my boy; all ready."

Joe looked comically at him, and handed over the lines; Jacob took them without a word, and drove off. Possibly three minutes might have passed in silence, when I saw that he was taking a road which led directly away from our intended fishing-ground.

"I say, Jacob, if you have no objections, where are we going, and why couldn't you give us some breakfast?"

"Breakfast? Plenty in the basket there, my dear boy, help yourself. Fine cold chicken, ham, bread and a bottle of chocolate. Three of the fattest duck you ever saw, the small sort, and a brace of quail; some hot Johnny cake, and sundries beside. But observe. The white mill brook hasn't been touched this spring above the bridge. This morning three fellows from the river came over and have just gone by. I'm suspicious they mean to whip the brook up from the bridge, with the wind. Now, if we drive fast, we can reach the wolf-hole by seven o'clock, and come down. There'll be no wind up there, and we can whip two rods to their one. There is fun to be had, and we'll just try it. What say you?"

Joe and I replied by attacking the breakfast, while the horses flew as if they knew the hurry Jacob was in. Over the hill and through the wood and down along the hickory swale, and then we dashed into the narrow road that led along the side of the mountain, and after about fifteen minutes of slower traveling, Jacob pulled up in a grove of oak trees, under the lee of a knoll,

which protected the horses perfectly from the March wind. Here we made them as comfortable as might be, and left Nora to guard them while we prepared our tackle and approached the water.

About two hundred yards below the grove where we left our horses, the brook entered suddenly a gorge or ravine, and plunged down a series of small and abrupt falls, until it reached a comparatively level country, and thence flowed in a deep stream with occasional rapids and bends, and some short descents, out toward the white mill, six miles below. Singularly enough, the trout in the upper part of the brook were totally different from those below the ravine; those above seldom growing to half the size of many in the open country. They were apparently of a different breed, although on examination proving to be the same in all respects, except the shape of the body. We commenced our descent of the ravine with some caution, Jacob leading and I bringing up the rear. Our progress was safe until we reached the last step from which the brook dashed, and here I called out to Jacob to stand still, while I threw over his head and tried the basin below. A statue could not be more motionless than he was until I made a second cast, when he saw a good two pounds of fish, with gold and crimson spots on his back, rise at my white fly, and hook himself as desperately as if he meant it.

Then in his delight, Jacob exclaimed aloud, and on the instant of speaking he vanished out of sight. Never

was feat of magic more rapid and astounding. The rock on which he had been standing was worn, and the winter ice had cracked it so that the outer edge of it fell with Jacob into the basin in which my trout was struggling. Puffing and blowing he came up to the surface, only to meet Joe's provokingly cool countenance and voice.

"Why, Jacob—Jacob Small, I say, don't be in such a hurry after the trout, man; let's all have a fair chance."

He made the best of his way to the bank, on which he sat down, and the only consolation he appeared to find was in the fact, that while I had been laughing till my sides ached, the trout had unhooked himself, and was away down the stream to tell his neighbors that we were coming.

The first large fish hooked was about fifty rods below Jacob's bathing place. On the bank stood an oak tree, and in the middle of the stream was a large rock, around which the water gurgled and rushed swiftly. In the wake of the rock, or below it, was still deep water, and as Jacob's hook fell in just above it and passed into the still water below, a fine fish, weighing at least three pounds, took the bait. For Jacob disdained flies until May, and I more than half agree with him.

The tip of his rod was almost as slender as a knitting needle. It was one of his own make, and a graceful rod it was in his hands. The small stick was bent nearly

double at times, and swayed to and fro, as the fish tried now one bank of the brook, now the other. We were none of us visible. Jacob's head and shoulders might perhaps have been seen at one moment, but the trout was contending with an invisible foe.

"Keep quiet, boys. There's another one in the eddy there, and I'll have him after I get through with this one. I say, Philip, just cast your fly across the ripple on the other side of the rock; but lie low, while you are about it."

I obeyed, and, at the third cast, pricked a good-sized fish but did not hook him. Once more, and he rose to it finely this time, but dashed down the stream, under Jacob's line which was now out some ten fathoms, while his fish lay in the shadow of the bank across the brook.

Passing my rod under Jacob's, I left him working alone, and followed my trout down the stream a dozen rods, and landed him without difficulty. He would not weigh much over a pound and a half; Jacob soon joined me, having secured his fish, and Joe took one out just below me.

For an hour we remained on this brook, and I then proposed to go to the large creek over the hill, as we had originally intended, where I hoped to find larger fish. This was agreed to, and we drove rapidly over the mountain, reaching the usual halting place in an hour or so.

It was in a ravine, down which three several brooks

pour from the different mountain-passes, meeting in a basin at the foot of a large rocky bluff, there forming a strong stream that flows through Jacob's farm, three miles below, and out into the level country, and down through the village.

The basin is overshadowed by large trees, without underbrush on one side, and the ripple of the streams entering it, produces a constant disturbance of the kind most favorable to the use of the fly. A half mile farther up one of the streams is a deep hole, at the foot of a waterfall, where sometimes the largest trout are lying in wait for stray flies and worms.

To the latter place I directed my way, while Joe and Small remained in the vicinity of the basin, but reserving it for our united presence. I had not yet reached the deep hole in the stream when I saw a trout break the water on a swift rapid, and making a hasty cast across the stream, I hooked a very handsome fish, and landed him without trouble, by lifting him as he shot down the current.

Passing directly on to the point which I have mentioned, I approached cautiously, and looking over the edge of a rock surveyed with pleasure the dark surface of the pool, flecked with scattered foam. On the opposite bank hung the rich foliage and blossoms of the rhododendron; and close to the edge of the water were bunches of liverwort, blue violets, and the anemone, growing thickly; while the air was loaded with the fragrance of the woodbine.

A blossom of the rhododendron, not unlike a brilliant moth, fluttered to the surface of the pool, and just before it struck the water, I saw a yellow gleam under it, and a lazy head breaking the surface.

My gray fly was over the water in an instant, and provoked the same large trout to lift himself to the top, but no farther, and he seemed indisposed to try the bait. A dozen times I coaxed him up from his hole under a rock, and failed to hook him. He seemed rather to wish to see the fly than to taste it. I changed it, but without success; and the almost infallible red fly did not even raise him.

I then went back into the forest, and found an old tree which I kicked to pieces with my heel, and I soon had a half dozen small, black active worms, with which I returned to the water. Preserving my gray fly, I passed the hook through one of these, so as to leave him free to move, and taking in all my line but a fathom or so, held my rod carefully over the water, so that the worm should occasionally touch it, and disturb the glassy smoothness of the pool. This bait took. The first touch of the worm to the surface was answered by a rush of two large fish; of course one only succeeding in hooking himself. The reel flew around swiftly at first, but he took not more than ten fathoms of line, and buried himself under the opposite bank of the basin. I had not felt him yet to judge of his weight and strength, and the capability of my rod to land him. I had but a slight lance-wood and bone tip;

and though it would bend double without breaking last year, I feared that it might have become dry in the winter.

Gently drawing on him as he lay in his hole, I had opportunity to weigh him; and thinking that he could not go over three pounds, I determined to try a dead lift on him, and accordingly teased him till he started out, and I reeled in as he came across toward me.

But he was too stout a swimmer for my rod. The first lift I made, bent the tip to a semicircle, and I saw that the curve was slightly broken in one point, which I feared would prove weak, and I let him go.

I had not yet exposed myself, and did not wish to do so. I took a position near the outlet of the pool, behind the trunk of a fallen tree, and endeavored to drown him, but he kept a lively play around the upper part of the basin for ten minutes, and then made a sudden dash directly toward me. As he came into shoal water near me, I confess that I was guilty of unfairness: I struck at him with the branch of a tree that lay near, and effectually stopped him.

The one that had attempted to seize my hook, and failed, had now a claim on my attention. I prepared another fly precisely as the former one was baited, and hooked another fish at the second or third cast. This was done under the waterfall, and he seemed to be aware of the fate of his predecessor, for with praiseworthy acuteness, he made a straight course down stream. I followed with what haste I could. But he was

fast taking out my line, and I gave him fifty fathoms before I had run as many myself.

The bank of the stream was impracticable for me so long as I held my rod, and I took to the water. Checking my fish as well as I could, I followed him down more than a quarter of a mile, when I succeeded in stopping him, and advanced toward him. He had gone under the bank on the side of a rapid, and I approached with care, placed my hand under him, and as he settled into my grasp, I introduced a thumb and finger into his gills and lifted him into my basket.

At this moment I heard Joe's voice within a few rods of me.

"Why, Jacob, man—what are you about? The second time today! Is that the way you do your trouting? Upon my word, Jacob, I'll have you indicted for robbing the brooks, if you go into it in that sort of way."

Hastening toward them, I saw Jacob floundering in the middle of the brook, and Joe standing on the bank and preaching to him. Small had hooked a trout, and zealously followed him down the stream, but stepping incautiously on a rock, which was as smooth as ice, he had plunged feet foremost down a rapid, in which he was lying when I came up. Nothing discouraged, however, he gathered up himself, and his rod which had never left his hand, and coolly and carefully landed a very respectable fish, which, to judge from the quietness with which he allowed himself to be

taken, had been astonished into torpor by the unusual invasion of his territories.

Jacob now sought a sunny place in which to dry himself, and found it at an angle of the brook, where it swept around at a grassy point on the one side and under a dark rock on the other. Willis stood by him, professing to watch lest he be dissolved—but in fact to talk about certain farm matters, wherein Joe wanted the opinion of a man of Jacob's experience—while I sat on a rock, in the centre of the stream, and threw my fly under the high bank opposite to them.

But here I took no fish, and my exertions subsided into a lazy casting of my fly, until at length I gave over even that, and enjoyed the scene while I listened to the conversation between Willis and Small.

It was very still and calm in the glen, and the sound of the wind in the tree-tops was like distant music. The sunshine stole down through the hemlock and pine branches, and danced on the ripples as lightly as if glad to find a place to dance after long travel through the blue. The air was life-giving and rich. The sky seemed resting on the tree-tops that fringed the mountain ridges; and one could not look up without that longing to be away in the cool rich air, floating, not flying, which a warm spring day almost invariably inspires.

Suddenly, however, Joe interrupted himself in the middle of a sentence, ran toward the stream, and made a swift but graceful cast of his line across a fallen tree

that obstructed the flow of the rapid; and by the sharp whirr of his reel, I knew that he had hooked a large fish. For ten minutes he battled with him, and at length conquered. He was a noble fellow, and required the landing-hook to bring him out.

We had now as many fish as we cared for; and we returned to the basin to finish our forenoon's sport there.

In this large basin the trout abound; and we never failed to hook as many as we had lines in it. But after once hooking a fish, it becomes necessary to expose yourself, and usually to take to the water before you can get your fish out. The result, of course, is that you are not apt to hook a second one immediately.

But we took our places separately, and each man cast in his own part of the basin. In a moment we had each hooked a fish; and in the next moment, the three had gone to the centre of the basin, swam around each other, twisted up our lines, and made as great a scene of confusion as could be desired. There was but one resource: we wound the lines still more firmly around each other and then worked all together. In five minutes I parted my line, and Jacob's followed. Joe had the three fish on his rod; and as the three lines were wet, it was hardly probable they would unwind. It required careful management, however, to kill the three fish; and Joe went to work deliberately.

For ten minutes or more, he teased them, and let them tease each other. After pulling different ways,

tearing one another's mouths, and various futile attempts at escape, they grew sluggish, and allowed themselves to be dragged around.

He now led them slowly down toward the rapid outlet of the basin, which spread out into a broad stream, running over gravel and stone. A vigorous and watchful hand led all three into a shallow side stream, where they suddenly found themselves with their backs out of water, and our landing hooks readily secured them.

It was now past noon, and we had taken a large lot of fine fish. We accordingly returned to the wagon, and drove down to Jacob's for luncheon of which an important part was one of the last three trout we had taken.

A SHARK STORY

by T. C. Haliburton

"WELL, GENTLEMEN, I'LL GO AHEAD, IF YOU SAY SO. Here's the story. It is true, upon my honour, from beginning to end—every word of it. I once crossed over to Faulkner's Island to fish for *tautaugs*, as the north-side people call black fish, on the reefs hard by, in the Long Island Sound. Tim Titus (who died of the dropsy down at Shinnecock point, last spring) lived there then. Tim was a right good fellow, only he drank rather too much.

"It was during the latter part of July; the sharks and the dog-fish had just begun to spoil sport. When Tim told me about the sharks, I resolved to go prepared to entertain these aquatic savages with all becoming attention and regard, if there should chance to be any interloping about our fishing-ground. So we rigged out a set of extra large hooks, and shipped some rope-yarn and steel chain, an axe, a couple of clubs, and an old harpoon, in addition to our ordinary equip-

ments, and off we started. We threw out our anchor at half ebb-tide, and took some thumping large fish; two of them weighed thirteen pounds—so you may judge. The reef where we lay was about half a mile from the island, and, perhaps, a mile from the Connecticut shore. We floated there, very quietly, throwing out and hauling in, until the breaking of my line, with a sudden and severe jerk, informed me that the sea attorneys were in waiting downstairs; and we accordingly prepared to give them a retainer. A salt pork cloak upon one of our magnum hooks forthwith engaged one of the gentlemen in our service. We got him alongside, and by dint of piercing, and thrusting, and banging, we accomplished a most exciting and merry murder. We had business enough of the kind to keep us employed until near low water. By this time the sharks had all cleared out, and the black fish were biting again; the rock began to make its appearance above the water, and in a little while its hard bald head was entirely dry. Tim now proposed to set me out upon the rock, while he rowed ashore to get the jug, which, strange to say, we had left at the house. I assented to this proposition; first, because I began to feel the effects of the sun upon my tongue, and needed something to take, by the way of medicine; and secondly, because the rock was a favourite spot for rod and reel, and famous for luck: so I took my traps, and a box of bait, and jumped upon my new station. Tim made for the island.

"Not many men would willingly have been left upon a little barren reef that was covered by every flow of the tide, in the midst of a waste of waters, at such a distance from the shore, even with an assurance from a companion more to be depended upon than mine, that he would return immediately and take him off. But somehow or other, the excitement of the sport was so high, and the romance of the situation was so delightful, that I thought of nothing else but the prospect of my fun, and the contemplation of the novelty and beauty of the scene. It was a mild, pleasant afternoon, in harvest time. The sky was clear and pure. The deep blue sound, heaving all around me, was studded with craft of all descriptions and dimensions, from the dipping sail-boat to the rolling merchantman, sinking and rising like sea-birds sporting with their white wings in the surge. The grain and grass on the neighbouring farms were gold and green, and gracefully they bent obeisance to a gently breathing south-wester. Farther off, the high upland, and the distant coast, gave a dim relief to the prominent features of the landscape, and seemed the rich but dusky frame of a brilliant fairy picture. Then, how still it was! Not a sound could be heard, except the occasional rustling of my own motion, and the water beating against the sides, or gurgling in the fissures of the rock, or except now and then the cry of a solitary saucy gull, who would come out of his way in the firmament, to see what I was doing without a boat, all

alone, in the middle of the sound; and who would hover, and cry, and chatter, and make two or three circling swoops and dashes at me, and then, after having satisfied his curiosity, glide away in search of some other food to scream at.

"I soon became half indolent, and quite indifferent about fishing; so I stretched myself out at full length upon the rock and gave myself up to the luxury of looking and thinking. The divine exercise soon put me fast asleep. I dreamed away a couple of hours, and longer might have dreamed, but for a tired fish-hawk who chose to make my head his resting-place, and who waked and started me to my feet.

" 'Where is Tim Titus?' I muttered to myself, as I strained my eyes over the now darkened water. But none was near me to answer that interesting question, and nothing was to be seen of either Tim or his boat. 'He should have been here long ere this,' thought I, 'and he promised faithfully not to stay long—could he have forgotten? or has he paid too much devotion to the jug?'

"I began to feel uneasy, for the tide was rising fast, and soon would cover the top of the rock, and high water-mark was at least a foot above my head. I buttoned up my coat, for either the coming coolness of the evening, or else my growing apprehensions, had set me trembling and chattering most painfully. I braced my nerves, and set my teeth, and tried to hum 'Begone, dull care,' keeping time with my fists upon

my thighs. But what music! what melancholy merriment! I started and shuddered at the doleful sound of my own voice. I am not naturally a coward; but I should like to know the man who would not, in such a situation, be alarmed. It is a cruel death to die to be merely drowned, and to go through the ordinary commonplaces of suffocation; but to see your death gradually rising to your eyes, to feel the water rising, inch by inch, upon your shivering sides, and to anticipate the certainly coming, choking struggle for your last breath, when, with the gurgling sound of an overflowing brook taking a new direction, the cold brine pours into mouth, ears, and nostrils, usurping the seat and avenues of health and life, and, with gradual flow, stifling—smothering—suffocating! It were better to die a thousand common deaths.

"This is one of the instances in which, it must be admitted, salt water is not a pleasant subject of contemplation. However, the rock was not yet covered, and hope, blessed hope, stuck faithfully by me. To beguile, if possible, the weary time, I put on a bait, and threw out for fish. I was sooner successful than I could have wished to be, for hardly had my line struck the water, before the hook was swallowed, and my rod was bent with the dead hard pull of a twelve-foot shark. I let him run about fifty yards, and then reeled up. He appeared not at all alarmed, and I could scarcely feel him bear upon my fine hair line. He followed the pull gently and unresisting, came up

to the rock, laid his nose upon its side, and looked up into my face, not as if utterly unconcerned, but with a sort of quizzical impudence, as though he perfectly understood the precarious nature of my situation. The conduct of my captive renewed and increased my alarm. And well it might; for the tide was now running over a corner of the rock behind me, and a small stream rushed through a cleft, or fissure, by my side, and formed a puddle at my very feet. I broke my hook out of the monster's mouth, and leaned upon my rod for support.

"'Where is Tim Titus?' I cried aloud. 'Curse on the drunken vagabond! Will he never come?'

"My ejaculations did no good. No Timothy appeared. It became evident that I must prepare for drowning, or for action. The reef was completely covered, and the water was above the soles of my feet. I was not much of a swimmer, and as to ever reaching the island, I could not even hope for that. However, there was no alternative, and I tried to encourage myself, by reflecting that necessity was the mother of invention, and that desperation will sometimes ensure success. Besides, too, I considered and took comfort from the thought that I could wait for Tim, so long as I had a foothold, and then commit myself to the uncertain strength of my arms and legs for salvation. So I turned my bait-box upside down, and mounting upon that, endeavoured to comfort my spirits, and to be courageous, but submissive to my

fate. I thought of death, and what it might bring with it, and I tried to repent of the multiplied iniquities of my almost wasted life; but I found that that was no place for a sinner to settle his accounts. Wretched soul, pray I could not.

"The water had not got above my ankles, when, to my inexpressible joy, I saw a sloop bending down towards me, with the evident intention of picking me up. No man can imagine what were the sensations of gratitude which filled my bosom at that moment.

"When she got within a hundred yards of the reef, I sung out to the man at the helm to luff up, and lie by, and lower the boat; but to my amazement, I could get no reply, nor notice of my request. I entreated them, for the love of heaven, to take me off; and I promised I know not what rewards, that were entirely beyond my power of bestowal. But the brutal wretch of a captain, muttering something to the effect of 'that he hadn't time to stop,' and giving me the kind and sensible advice to pull off my coat and swim ashore, put the helm hard down, and away bore the sloop on the other tack.

" 'Heartless villain!' I shrieked out, in the torture of my disappointment; 'may God reward your inhumanity.'

"The crew answered my prayer with a coarse, loud laugh; and the cook asked me through a speaking-trumpet if I was not afraid of catching cold.—The black rascal!

"It was time to strip; for my knees felt the cool tide, and the wind dying away, left a heavy swell, that swayed and shook the box upon which I was mounted, so that I had occasionally to stoop, and paddle with my hands against the water in order to preserve my perpendicular. The setting sun sent his almost horizontal streams of fire across the dark waters, making them gloomy and terrific, by the contrast of his amber and purple glories.

"Something glided by me in the water, and then made a sudden halt. I looked upon the black mass, and, as my eye ran along its dark outline, I saw, with horror, that it was a shark; the identical monster out of whose mouth I had just broken my hook. He was fishing now for me, and was evidently only waiting for the tide to rise high enough above the rock, to glut at once his hunger and revenge. As the water continued to mount above my knees, he seemed to grow more hungry and familiar. At last, he made a desperate dash, and approaching within an inch of my legs, turned upon his back, and opened his huge jaws for an attack. With desperate strength, I thrust the end of my rod violently at his mouth; and the brass head, ringing against his teeth, threw him back into the deep current, and I lost sight of him entirely. This, however, was but a momentary repulse; for in the next minute he was close behind my back, and pulling at the skirts of my fustian coat, which hung dipping into the water. I leaned forward hastily, and endeavoured

to extricate myself from the dangerous grasp; but the monster's teeth were too firmly set, and his immense strength nearly drew me over. So, down flew my rod, and off went my jacket, devoted peace-offerings to my voracious visitor.

"In an instant the waves all round me were lashed into froth and foam. No sooner was my poor old sporting friend drawn under the surface, than it was fought for by at least a dozen enormous combatants! The battle raged upon every side. High black fins rushed now here, now there, and long, strong tails scattered sleet and froth, and the brine was thrown up in jets, and eddied and curled, and fell, and swelled, like a whirlpool in Hell-gate.

"Of no long duration, however, was this fishy tourney. It seemed soon to be discovered that the prize contended for contained nothing edible but cheese and crackers, and no flesh; and as its mutilated fragments rose to the surface, the waves subsided into their former smooth condition. Not till then did I experience the real terrors of my situation. As I looked around me to see what had become of the robbers, I counted one, two, three, yes, up to twelve, successively, of the largest sharks I ever saw, floating in a circle around me, like divergent rays, all mathematically equidistant from the rock, and from each other; each perfectly motionless, and with his gloating, fiery eye, fixed full and fierce upon me. Basilisks and rattlesnakes! how the fire of their steady eyes entered into my heart! I was

the centre of a circle, whose radii were sharks! I was the unsprung, or rather *unchewed* game, at which a pack of hunting sea-dogs were making a dead point!

"There was one old fellow, that kept within the circumference of the circle. He seemed to be a sort of captain, or leader of the band; or, rather, he acted as the coroner for the other twelve of the inquisition, that were summoned to sit on, and eat up my body. He glided around and about, and every now and then would stop, and touch his nose against some one of his comrades, and seem to consult, or to give instructions as to the time and mode of operation. Occasionally, he would skull himself up towards me, and examine the condition of my flesh, and then again glide back, and rejoin the troupe, and flap his tail, and have another confabulation. The old rascal had, no doubt, been out into the highways and byways, and collected this company of his friends and kin-fish, and invited them to supper.

"I must confess, that horribly as I felt, I could not help but think of a tea-party of demure old maids, sitting in a solemn circle, with their skinny hands in their laps, licking their expectant lips, while their hostess bustles about in the important functions of her preparations. With what an eye have I seen such appurtenances of humanity survey the location and adjustment of some special condiment, which is about to be submitted to criticism and consumption.

"My sensations began to be now most exquisite

indeed; but I will not attempt to describe them. I was neither hot nor cold, frightened nor composed; but I had a combination of all kinds of feelings and emotions. The present, past, future, heaven, earth, my father and mother, a little girl I knew once, and the sharks, were all confusedly mixed up together, and swelled my crazy brain almost to bursting. I cried, and laughed, and spouted, and screamed for Tim Titus.

"In a fit of most wise madness I opened my broad-bladed fishing-knife, and waved it around my head with an air of defiance. As the tide continued to rise my extravagance of madness mounted. At one time I became persuaded that my tide-waiters were reasonable beings, who might be talked into mercy and humanity, if a body could only hit upon the right text. So I bowed, and gesticulated, and threw out my hands, and talked to them, as friends and brothers, members of my family, cousins, uncles, aunts, people waiting to have their bills paid; I scolded them as my servants; I abused them as duns; I implored them as jurymen sitting on the question of my life; I congratulated and flattered them as my comrades upon some glorious enterprise; I sung and ranted to them, now as an actor in a play-house, and now as an elder at a camp-meeting; in one moment, roaring,

'*On this cold flinty rock I will lay down my head*,'—

and in the next, giving out to my attentive hearers for singing, a hymn of Dr. Watts's so admirably appropriate to the occasion:

'On slippery rocks I see them stand,
While fiery billows roll below.'

"What said I, what did I not say! Prose and poetry, Scripture and drama, romance and ratiocination—out it came. 'Quamdiu, Catalina, nostra patientia abutere?' —I sung out to the old captain, to begin with: 'My brave associates, partners of my toil,'—so ran the strain. 'On which side soever I turn my eyes,'—'Gentlemen of the jury,'—'I come not here to steal away your hearts,'—'You are not wood, you are not stones, but'—'Hah!'—'Begin, ye tormentors, your tortures are vain,'—'Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up to any sudden flood,'—'The angry flood that lashed her groaning sides,'—'Ladies and gentlemen,'—'My very noble and approved good masters,'—'Avaunt! and quit my sight; let the earth hide ye.'—'Lie lightly on his head, O earth!'—'O, heaven and earth, that it should come to this!'—'The torrent roared, and we did buffet it with lusty sinews, stemming it aside and oaring it with hearts of controversy,' —'Give me some drink, Titinius,'—'Drink, boys, drink, and drown dull sorrow,'—'For liquor it doth roll such comfort to the soul,'—'Romans, countrymen and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear,'—'Fellow-citizens, assembled as we are upon

this interesting occasion, impressed with the truth and beauty,'—'Isle of beauty, fare thee well,'—'The quality of mercy is not strained,'—'Magna veritas et prevalebit,'—'Truth is potent, and'—'Most potent, grave, and reverend seigniors':

'Oh, now you weep; and I perceive you feel
The dint of pity: these are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what, weep you when you but behold
Our Cæsar's vesture wounded?'

Ha! ha! ha!—and I broke out in a fit of most horrible laughter, as I thought of the mince-meat particles of my lacerated jacket.

"In the meantime, the water had got well up towards my shoulders, and while I was shaking, and vibrating upon my uncertain foothold, I felt the cold nose of the captain of the band snubbing against my side. Desperately, and without a definite object, I struck my knife at one of his eyes, and, by some singular fortune, cut it out clean from the socket. The shark darted back, and halted. In an instant hope and reason came to my relief; and it occurred to me, that if I could only blind the monster, I might yet escape. Accordingly, I stood ready for the next attack. The loss of an eye did not seem to affect him much, for after shaking his head once or twice, he came up to me again, and when he was about half an inch off, turned upon his back. This was the critical moment. With a most unaccountable presence of mind, I laid

hold of his nose with my left hand, and with my right scooped out his remaining organ of vision. He opened his big mouth and champed his long teeth at me, in despair. But it was all over with him. I raised my right foot and gave him a hard shove, and he glided off into deep water, and went to the bottom.

"Well, gentlemen, I suppose you'd think it a hard story, but it's none the less a fact, that I served every remaining one of those nineteen sharks in the same fashion. They all came up to me, one by one, regularly and in order, and I scooped their eyes out, and gave them a shove, and they went off into deep water, just like so many lambs. By the time I had scooped out and blinded a couple of dozen of them, they began to seem so scarce that I thought I would swim for the island, and fight the rest for fun, on the way; but just then, Tim Titus hove in sight, and it had got to be almost dark, and I concluded to get aboard and rest myself."

THE HOLE

by Guy de Maupassant

Cuts and Wounds Which Caused Death

That was the heading of the charge which brought Leopold Renard, upholsterer, before the Assize Court.

Round him were the principal witnesses, Mme. Flamèche, widow of the victim, Louis Ladureau, cabinetmaker, and Jean Durdent, plumber.

Near the criminal was his wife, dressed in black, a little ugly woman who looked like a monkey dressed as a lady.

This is how Renard described the drama:

"Good heavens, it is a misfortune of which I am the first and last victim and with which my will has nothing to do. The facts are their own commentary, Monsieur le Président. I am an honest man, a hard-working man, an upholsterer in the same street for the last sixteen years, known, liked, respected and

esteemed by all, as my neighbors have testified, even the porter, who is not *folâtre* every day. I am fond of work, I am fond of saving, I like honest men and respectable pleasures. That is what has ruined me, so much the worse for me; but as my will had nothing to do with it, I continue to respect myself.

"Every Sunday for the last five years my wife and I have spent the day at Passy. We get fresh air, not to say that we are fond of fishing—as fond of it as we are of small onions. Mélie inspired me with that passion, the jade; she is more enthusiastic than I am, the scold, and all the mischief in this business is her fault, as you will see immediately.

"I am strong and mild-tempered, without a pennyworth of malice in me. But she, oh la la! She looks insignificant, she is short and thin, but she does more mischief than a weasel. I do not deny that she has some good qualities; she has some, and those very important to a man in business. But her character! Just ask about it in the neighborhood; even the porter's wife, who has just sent me about my business—she will tell you something about it.

"Every day she used to find fault with my mild temper: 'I would not put up with this! I would not put up with that.' If I had listened to her, Monsieur le Président, I should have had at least three bouts of fisticuffs a month."

Mme. Renard interrupted him: "And for good reasons too; they laugh best who laugh last."

He turned toward her frankly. "Oh! very well, I can blame you, since you were the cause of it."

Then, facing the president again, he said:

"I will continue. We used to go to Passy every Saturday evening, so as to be able to begin fishing at daybreak the next morning. It is a habit which has become second nature with us, as the saying is. Three years ago this summer I discovered a place, oh! such a spot! There, in the shade, were eight feet of water at least and perhaps ten, a hole with a *retour* under the bank, a regular retreat for fish and a paradise for any fisherman. I might look upon that hole as my property, Monsieur le Président, as I was its Christopher Columbus. Everybody in the neighborhood knew it, without making any opposition. They used to say: 'That is Renard's place'; and nobody would have gone to it, not even Monsieur Plumsay, who is renowned, be it said without any offense, for appropriating other people's places.

"Well, I went as usual to that place, of which I felt as certain as if I had owned it. I had scarcely got there on Saturday when I got into Delila, with my wife. Delila is my Norwegian boat which I had built by Fourmaise and which is light and safe. Well, as I said, we got into the boat and we were going to bait, and for baiting there is nobody to be compared with me, and they all know it. You want to know with what I bait? I cannot answer that question; it has nothing to do with the accident; I cannot answer, that is my

secret. There are more than three hundred people who have asked me; I have been offered glasses of brandy and liquors, fried fish, matelots,[1] to make me tell! But just go and try whether the chub will come. Ah! they have patted my stomach to get at my secret, my recipe. Only my wife knows, and she will not tell it any more than I shall! Is not that so, Mélie?"

The president of the court interrupted him:

"Just get to the facts as soon as you can."

The accused continued: "I am getting to them; I am getting to them. Well, on Saturday, July eighth, we left by the five-twenty-five train, and before dinner we went to grind bait as usual. The weather promised to keep fine, and I said to Mélie: 'All right for tomorrow!' And she replied: 'It looks like it.' We never talk more than that together.

"And then we returned to dinner. I was happy and thirsty, and that was the cause of everything. I said to Mélie: 'Look here, Mélie, it is fine weather, so suppose I drink a bottle of *Casque à mèche*.' That is a little white wine which we have christened so because if you drink too much of it it prevents you from sleeping and is the opposite of a nightcap. Do you understand me?

"She replied: 'You can do as you please, but you will be ill again and will not be able to get up tomorrow.' That was true, sensible, prudent and clear-sighted, I must confess. Nevertheless, I could not

[1]A preparation of several kinds of fish with a sharp sauce.

withstand it, and I drank my bottle. It all comes from that.

"Well, I could not sleep. By Jove! It kept me awake till two o'clock in the morning, and then I went to sleep so soundly that I should not have heard the angel shouting at the Last Judgment.

"In short, my wife woke me at six o'clock and I jumped out of bed, hastily put on my trousers and jersey, washed my face and jumped on board Delila. But it was too late, for when I arrived at my hole it was already taken! Such a thing had never happened to me in three years, and it made me feel as if I were being robbed under my own eyes. I said to myself, 'Confound it all! Confound it!' And then my wife began to nag at me. 'Eh! What about your *Casque à mèche!* Get along, you drunkard! Are you satisfied, you great fool?' I could say nothing, because it was all quite true, and so I landed all the same near the spot and tried to profit by what was left. Perhaps, after all, the fellow might catch nothing and go away.

"He was a little thin man in white linen coat and waistcoat and with a large straw hat, and his wife, a fat woman who was doing embroidery, was behind him.

"When she saw us take up our position close to their place she murmured: 'I suppose there are no other places on the river!' And my wife, who was furious, replied: 'People who know how to behave make in-

quiries about the habits of the neighborhood before occupying reserved spots.'

"As I did not want a fuss I said to her: 'Hold your tongue, Mélie. Let them go on, let them go on; we shall see.'

"Well, we had fastened Delila under the willow trees and had landed and were fishing side by side, Mélie and I, close to the two others; but here, monsieur, I must enter into details.

"We had only been there about five minutes when our male neighbor's float began to go down two or three times, and then he pulled out a chub as thick as my thigh, rather less, perhaps, but nearly as big! My heart beat and the perspiration stood on my forehead, and Mélie said to me: 'Well, you sot, did you see that?'

"Just then Monsieur Bru, the grocer of Poissy, who was fond of gudgeon fishing, passed in a boat and called out to me: 'So somebody has taken your usual place, Monsieur Renard?' And I replied: 'Yes, Monsieur Bru, there are some people in this world who do not know the usages of common politeness.'

"The little man in linen pretended not to hear, nor his fat lump of a wife, either."

Here the president interrupted him a second time: "Take care, you are insulting the widow, Madame Flamèche, who is present."

Renard made his excuses: "I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon; my anger carried me away. . . . Well,

not a quarter of an hour had passed when the little man caught another chub and another almost immediately and another five minutes later.

"The tears were in my eyes, and then I knew that Madame Renard was boiling with rage, for she kept on nagging at me: 'Oh, how horrid! Don't you see that he is robbing you of your fish? Do you think that you will catch anything? Not even a frog, nothing whatever. Why, my hands are burning just to think of it.'

"But I said to myself: 'Let us wait until twelve o'clock. Then this poaching fellow will go to lunch, and I shall get my place again.' As for me, Monsieur le Président, I lunch on the spot every Sunday; we bring our provisions in Delila. But there! At twelve o'clock the wretch produced a fowl out of a newspaper, and while he was eating, actually he caught another chub!

"Mélie and I had a morsel also, just a mouthful, a mere nothing, for our heart was not in it.

"Then I took up my newspaper, to aid my digestion. Every Sunday I read the *Gil Blas* in the shade like that, by the side of the water. It is Columbine's day, you know, Columbine who writes the articles in the *Gil Blas*. I generally put Madame Renard into a passion by pretending to know this Columbine. It is not true, for I do not know her and have never seen her, but that does not matter; she writes very well, and then she says things straight out for a woman. She suits me, and there are not many of her sort.

"Well, I began to tease my wife, but she got angry immediately and very angry, and so I held my tongue. At that moment our two witnesses, who are present here, Monsieur Ladureau and Monsieur Durdent, appeared on the other side of the river. We knew each other by sight. The little man began to fish again, and he caught so many that I trembled with vexation, and his wife said: 'It is an uncommonly good spot, and we will come here always, Desiré.' As for me, a cold shiver ran down my back, and Madame Renard kept repeating: 'You are not a man, you have the blood of a chicken in your veins'; and suddenly I said to her: 'Look here, I would rather go away, or I shall only be doing something foolish.'

"And she whispered to me as if she had put a red-hot iron under my nose: 'You are not a man. Now you are going to run away and surrender your place! Off you go, Bazaine!'

"Well, I felt that, but yet I did not move while the other fellow pulled out a bream. Oh! I never saw such a large one before, never! And then my wife began to talk aloud, as if she were thinking, and you can see her trickery. She said: 'That is what one might call stolen fish, seeing that we baited the place ourselves. At any rate they ought to give us back the money we have spent on bait.'

"Then the fat woman in the cotton dress said in turn: 'Do you mean to call us thieves, madame?' And they began to explain, and then they came to words.

Oh Lord! those creatures know some good ones. They shouted so loud that our two witnesses, who were on the other bank, began to call out by way of a joke: 'Less noise over there; you will prevent your husbands from fishing.'

"The fact is that neither of us moved any more than if we had been two tree stumps. We remained there, with our noses over the water, as if we had heard nothing; but, by Jove, we heard all the same. 'You are a mere liar.'

" 'You are nothing better than a streetwalker.'

" 'You are only a trollop.'

" 'You are a regular strumpet.'

"And so on and so on; a sailor could not have said more.

"Suddenly I heard a noise behind me and turned round. It was the other one, the fat woman, who had fallen on to my wife with her parasol. *Whack! whack!* Mélie got two of them, but she was furious, and she hits hard when she is in a rage, so she caught the fat woman by the hair and then, *thump, thump*. Slaps in the face rained down like ripe plums. I should have let them go on—women among themselves, men among themselves—it does not do to mix the blows, but the little man in the linen jacket jumped up like a devil and was going to rush at my wife. Ah! no, no, not that, my friend! I caught the gentleman with the end of my fist, *crash, crash*, one on the nose, the other in the

stomach. He threw up his arms and legs and fell on his back into the river, just into the hole.

"I should have fished him out most certainly, Monsieur le Président, if I had had the time. But unfortunately the fat woman got the better of it, and she was drubbing Mélie terribly. I know that I ought not to have assisted her while the man was drinking his fill, but I never thought that he would drown and said to myself: 'Bah, it will cool him.'

"I therefore ran up to the women to separate them, and all I received was scratches and bites. Good lord, what creatures! Well, it took me five minutes, and perhaps ten, to separate those two viragoes. When I turned around there was nothing to be seen, and the water was as smooth as a lake. The others yonder kept shouting: 'Fish him out!' It was all very well to say that, but I cannot swim and still less dive!

"At last the man from the dam came and two gentlemen with boat hooks, but it had taken over a quarter of an hour. He was found at the bottom of the hole in eight feet of water, as I have said, but he was dead, the poor little man in his linen suit! There are the facts, such as I have sworn to. I am innocent, on my honor."

The witnesses having deposed to the same effect, the accused was acquitted.

OLD FAITHFUL

by John Taintor Foote

"AND YOU NEVER HEARD OF OLD FAITHFUL?" HE asked suddenly. "Evidently not, from what you said a while ago. Well, a lot of people have, believe me. Men have gone to the Cuddiwink district just to see him. As I've already told you, he lay beside a ledge in the pool below Horseshoe Falls. Almost nothing else in the pool. He kept it cleaned out. Worst sort of cannibal, of course—all big trout are. That was the trouble—he wanted something that would stick to his ribs. No flies for him. Did his feeding at night.

"You could see him dimly if you crawled out on a rock that jutted above the pool and looked over. He lay in about ten feet of water, right by his ledge. If he saw you he'd back under the ledge, slowly, like a submarine going into dock. Think of the biggest thing you've ever seen, and that's the way Old Faithful looked, just lying there as still as the ledge. He

never seemed to move anything, not even his gills. When he backed in out of sight he seemed to be drawn under the ledge by some invisible force.

"Ridgway—R. Campbell Ridgway—you may have read his stuff, Brethren of the Wild, that sort of thing—claimed to have seen him move. He told me about it one night. He said he was lying with just his eyes over the edge of the rock, watching the trout. Said he'd been there an hour, when down over the falls came a young red squirrel. It had fallen in above and been carried over. The squirrel was half drowned, but struck out feebly for shore. Well, so Ridgway said—Old Faithful came up and took Mister Squirrel into camp. No hurry; just came drifting up, sort of inhaled the squirrel and sank down to the ledge again. Never made a ripple, Ridgway said; just business.

"I'm telling you all this because it's necessary that you get an idea of that trout in your mind. You'll see why in a minute. No one ever had hold of him. But it was customary, if you fished the Cuddiwink, to make a few casts over him before you left the stream. Not that you ever expected him to rise. It was just a sort of gesture. Everybody did it.

"Knowing that Isabelle had never seen trout taken before, I made a day of it—naturally. The trail to camp leaves the stream just at the falls. It was pretty late when we got to it. Isabelle had her arms full of—heaven knows what—flowers and grass and ferns and fir branches and colored leaves. She'd lugged the stuff

for hours. I remember once that day I was fighting a fourteen-inch fish in swift water and she came to the bank and wanted me to look at a ripe blackberry—I think it was—she'd found. How does that strike you? And listen! I said, 'It's a beauty, darling.' That's what I said—or something like that. . . . Here, don't you pay that check! Bring it here, waiter!"

"Go on, George!" I said. "We haven't time to argue about the check. You'd come to the trail for camp at the falls."

"I told Isabelle to wait at the trail for a few minutes, while I went below the falls and did the customary thing for the edification of Old Faithful. I only intended to make three or four casts with the Number Twelve Fly and the hair-fine leader I had on, but in getting down to the pool I hooked the fly in a bush. In trying to loosen it I stumbled over something and fell. I snapped the leader like a thread, and since I had to put on another, I tied on a fairly heavy one as a matter of form.

"I had reached for my box for a regulation fly of some sort when I remembered a fool thing that Billy Roach had given me up on the Beaverkill the season before. It was fully two inches long; I forget what he called it. He said you fished it dry for bass or large trout. He said you worked the tip of your rod and made it wiggle like a dying minnow. I didn't want the contraption, but he'd borrowed some fly oil from

me and insisted on my taking it. I'd stuck it in the breast pocket of my fishing jacket and forgotten it until then.

"Well, I felt in the pocket and there it was. I tied it on and went down to the pool. Now let me show you the exact situation." George seized a fork. "This is the pool." The fork traced an oblong figure on the tablecloth. "Here is Old Faithful's ledge." The fork deeply marked this impressive spot. "Here are the falls, with white water running to here. You can only wade to this point here, and then you have an abrupt six-foot depth. 'But you can put a fly from here to here with a long line,' you say. No, you can't. You've forgotten to allow for your back cast. Notice this bend here? That tells the story. You're not more than twenty feet from a lot of birch and what not, when you can no longer wade. 'Well then, it's impossible to put a decent fly on the water above the sunken ledge,' you say. It looks like it, but this is how it's done: right here is a narrow point running to here, where it dwindles off to a single flat rock. If you work out on the point you can jump across to this rock—situated right here—and there you are, with about a thirty-foot cast to the sunken ledge. Deep water all around you, of course, and the rock is slippery; but—there you are. Now notice this small cove, right here. The water from the falls rushes past it in a froth, but in the cove it forms a deep eddy, with the current

moving round and round, like this." George made a slow circular motion with the fork. "You know what I mean?"

I nodded.

"I got out on the point and jumped to the rock; got myself balanced, worked out the right amount of line and cast the dingaree Bill had forced on me, just above the sunken ledge. I didn't take the water lightly and I cast again, but I couldn't put it down decently. It would just flop in—too much weight and too many feathers. I suppose I cast it a dozen times, trying to make it settle like a fly. I wasn't thinking of trout—there would be nothing in there except Old Faithful—I was just monkeying with this doodlebug thing, now that I had it on.

"I gave up at last and let it lie out where I had cast it. I was standing there looking at the falls roaring down, not thinking about anything in particular, when I remembered Isabelle, waiting up on the trail. I raised my rod preparatory to reeling in and the what-you-may-call-'em made a kind of a dive and wiggle out there on the surface. I reached for my reel handle. Then I realized that the thingamajig wasn't on the water. I didn't see it disappear, exactly; I was just looking at it, and then it wasn't there. 'That's funny,' I thought, and struck instinctively. Well, I was fast—so it seemed—and no snags in there. I gave it the butt three or four times, but the rod only bowed and nothing budged. I tried to figure it out. I thought

perhaps a water-logged timber had come diving over the falls and upended right there. Then I noticed the rod take more of a bend and the line began to move through the water. It moved out slowly, very slowly, into the middle of the pool. It was exactly as though I was hooked onto a freight train just getting under way.

"I knew what I had hold of then, and yet I didn't believe it. I couldn't believe it. I kept thinking it was a dream, I remember. Of course, he could have gone away with everything I had any minute if he'd wanted to, but he didn't. He just kept moving slowly, round and round the pool. I gave him what pressure the tackle would stand, but he never noticed a little thing like that; just kept moving around the pool for hours, it seemed to me. I'd forgotten Isabelle; I admit that. I'd forgotten everything on earth. There didn't seem to be anything else on earth, as a matter of fact, except the falls and the pool and Old Faithful and me. At last Isabelle showed up on the bank above me, still lugging her ferns and what not. She called down to me above the noise of the falls. She asked me how long I expected her to wait alone in the woods, with night coming on.

"I hadn't had the faintest idea how I was going to try to land the fish until then. The water was boiling past the rock I was standing on, and I couldn't jump back to the point without giving him slack and perhaps falling in. I began to look around and figure. Isabelle

said, 'What on earth are you doing?' I took off my landing net and tossed it to the bank. I yelled, 'Drop that junk quick and pick up that net!' She said, 'What for, George?' I said, 'Do as I tell you and don't ask questions!' She laid down what she had and picked up the net and I told her to go to the cove and stand ready.

"She said, 'Ready for what?' I said, 'You'll see what presently. Just stand there.' I'll admit I wasn't talking quietly. There was the noise of the falls to begin with, and—well, naturally I wasn't.

"I went to work on the fish again. I began to educate him to lead. I thought if I could lead him into the cove he would swing right past Isabelle and she could net him. It was slow work—a three-ounce rod—imagine! Isabelle called, 'Do you know what time it is?' I told her to keep still and stand where she was. She didn't say anything more after that.

"At last the fish began to come. He wasn't tired—he'd never done any fighting, as a matter of fact—but he'd take a suggestion as to where to go from the rod. I kept swinging him nearer and nearer the cove each time he came around. When I saw he was about ready to come I yelled to Isabelle. I said, 'I'm going to bring him right past you, close to the top. All you have to do is to net him.'

"When the fish came round again I steered him into the cove. Just as he was swinging past Isabelle the stuff she'd been lugging began to roll down the bank.

She dropped the landing net on top of the fish and made a dive for those leaves and grasses and things. Fortunately the net handle lodged against the bank, and after she'd put her stuff in a nice safe place she came back and picked up the net again. I never uttered a syllable. I deserve no credit for that. The trout had made a surge and shot out into the pool and I was too busy just then to give her any idea of what I thought.

"I had a harder job getting him to swing in again. He was a little leery of the cove, but at last he came. I steered him toward Isabelle and lifted him all I dared. He came up nicely, clear to the top. I yelled, 'Here he comes! For God's sake, don't miss him!' I put everything on the tackle it would stand and managed to check the fish for an instant right in front of Isabelle.

"And this is what she did: it doesn't seem credible—it doesn't seem humanly possible; but it's a fact that you'll have to take my word for. She lifted the landing net above her head with both hands and brought it down on top of the fish with all her might!"

George ceased speaking. Despite its coating of talcum powder, I was able to detect an additional pallor in his countenance.

"Will I ever forget it as long as I live?" he inquired at last.

"No, George," I said, "but we've just exactly eleven minutes left."

George made a noticeable effort and went on:

"By some miracle the fish stayed on the hook; but I got a faint idea of what would have happened if he'd taken a real notion to fight. He went around that pool so fast it must have made him dizzy. I heard Isabelle say, 'I didn't miss him, George'; and then—well, I didn't lose my temper; you wouldn't call it that exactly. I hardly knew what I said. I'll admit I shouldn't have said it. But I did say it; no doubt of that; no doubt of that whatever."

"What was it you said?" I asked.

George looked at me uneasily.

"Oh, the sort of thing a man would say impulsively —under the circumstances."

"Was it something disparaging about her?" I inquired.

"Oh, no," said George, "nothing about her. I simply intimated—in a somewhat brutal way, I suppose—that she'd better get away from the pool—er—not bother me any more is what I meant to imply."

For the first time since George had chosen me for a confidant I felt a lack of frankness on his part.

"Just what did you say, George?" I insisted.

"Well, it wasn't altogether my words," he evaded. "It was the tone I used, as much as anything. Of course, the circumstances would excuse— Still, I regret it. I admit that. I've told you so plainly."

There was no time in which to press him further.

"Well, what happened then?" I asked.

"Isabelle just disappeared. She went up the bank, of course, but I didn't see her go. Old Faithful was still nervous and I had to keep my eye on the line. He quieted down in a little while and continued to promenade slowly around the pool. I suppose this kept up for half an hour more. Then I made up my mind that something had to be done. I turned very carefully on the rock, lowered the tip until it was on a line with the fish, turned the rod under my arm until it was pointing behind me and jumped.

"Of course, I had to give him slack; but I kept my balance on the point by the skin of my teeth, and when I raised the rod he was still on. I worked to the bank, giving out line, and crawled under some bushes and things and got around to the cove at last. Then I started to work again to swing him into the cove, but absolutely nothing doing. I could lead him anywhere except into the cove. He'd had enough of that; I didn't blame him, either.

"To make a long story short, I stayed with him for two hours. For a while it was pretty dark; but there was a good-sized moon that night, and when it rose it shone right down on the pool through a gap in the trees fortunately. My wrist was gone completely, but I managed to keep some pressure on him all the time, and at last he forgot about what had happened to him in the cove. I swung him in and the current brought him past me. He was on his side by now. I don't think he was tired even then—just discouraged. I let him drift

over the net, heaved him out on the bank and sank down beside him, absolutely all in. I couldn't have got to my feet on a bet. I just sat there in a sort of daze and looked at Old Faithful, gleaming in the moonlight."

SALAR THE SALMON

by Henry Williamson

SALAR SLEPT. THE WATER LIGHTENED WITH SUNRISE. He lay in shadow. His eyes were fixed, passively susceptible to all movement. The sun rose up. Leaves and stalks of loose weed and water moss passing were seen but unnoticed by the automatic stimulus of each eye's retina. The eyes worked together with the unconscious brain, while the nerves, centres of direct feeling, rested themselves. One eye noticed a trout hovering in the water above, but Salar did not see it.

The sun rose higher, and shone down on the river, and slowly the shadow of the ledge shrank into its base. Light revealed Salar, a grey-green uncertain dimness behind a small pale spot appearing and disappearing regularly.

Down there Salar's right eye was filled with the sun's blazing fog. His left eye saw the wall of rock and the water above. The trout right forward of him swam up, inspected that which had attracted it, and

swam down again; but Salar's eye perceived no movement. The shadow of the trout in movement did not fall on the salmon's right eye.

A few moments later there was a slight splash left forward of Salar. Something swung over, casting the thinnest shadow; but it was seen by the eye, which awakened the conscious brain. Salar was immediately alert.

The thing vanished. A few moments later, it appeared nearer to him.

With his left eye Salar watched the thing moving overhead. It swam in small jerks, across the current and just under the surface, opening and shutting, gleaming, glinting, something trying to get away. Salar, curious and alert, watched it until it was disappearing and then he swam up and around to take it ahead of its arc of movement. The surface water, however, was flowing faster than the river at midstream, and he misjudged the opening of his mouth, and the thing, which recalled sea feeding, escaped.

On the bank upriver fifteen yards away a fisherman with fourteen-foot split-cane rod said to himself, excitedly, "Rising short"; and, pulling loops of line between reel and lowest ring of rod, he took a small pair of scissors from a pocket and snipped off the thing which had attracted Salar.

No wonder Salar had felt curious about it, for human thought had ranged the entire world to imagine that lure. It was called a fly; but no fly like it ever

swam in air or flew through water. Its tag, which had glinted, was of silver from Nevada and silk of a moth from Formosa; its tail, from the feather of an Indian crow; its butt, black herl of African ostrich; its body, yellow floss silk veiled with orange breast feathers of the South American toucan, and black Macclesfield silk ribbed with silver tinsel. This fly was given the additional attraction of wings for water flight, made of strips of feathers from many birds: turkey from Canada, peahen and peacock from Japan, swan from Ireland, bustard from Arabia, golden pheasant from China, teal and wild duck and mallard from the Hebrides. Its throat was made of the feather of an English speckled hen, its side of Bengal jungle cock's neck feathers, its cheeks came from a French kingfisher, its horns from the tail of an Amazonian macaw. Wax, varnish, and enamel secured the "marriage" of the feathers. It was one of hundreds of charms, or materialized riverside incantations, made by men to persuade sleepy or depressed salmon to rise and take. Invented after a bout of seasickness by a Celt as he sailed the German Ocean between England and Norway, for nearly a hundred years this fly had borne his name, Jock Scott.

While the fisherman was tying a smaller pattern of the same fly to the end of the gut cast, dark-stained by nitrate of silver against underwater glint, Salar rose to midwater and hovered there. Behind him lay the trout, which, scared by the sudden flash of the big

fish turning, had dropped back a yard. So Salar had hovered three years before in his native river, when, as parr spotted like a trout, and later as silvery smolt descending to the sea, he had fed eagerly on nymphs of the olive dun and other Ephemeridæ coming down with the current.

He opened his mouth and sucked in a nymph as it was swimming to the surface. The fisherman saw a swirl on the water, and threw his fly, with swish of double-handed rod, above and to the right of the swirl. Then, lowering the rod point until it was almost parallel to the water, he let the current take the fly slowly across the stream, lifting the rod tip and lowering it slightly and regularly to make it appear to be swimming.

Salar saw the fly and slowly swam up to look at it. He saw it clear in the bright water and sank away again, uninterested in the lifelessness of its bright colors. Again it reappeared, well within his skylight window. He ignored it, and it moved out of sight. Then it fell directly over him, jigging about in the water, and with it a dark thin thing which he regarded cautiously. This was the gut case. Once more it passed over, and then again, but he saw only the dark thinness moving there. It was harmless. He ignored it. Two other salmon below Salar, one in a cleft of rock and the other beside a sodden oak log wedged under the bank, also saw the too bright thing, and found no vital interest in it.

The fisherman pulled in the line through the rod rings. It was of plaited silk, tapered and enameled for ease of casting. The line fell over his boot. Standing still, he cut off the fly, and began a search for another in a metal box, wherein scores of mixed feathers were ranged on rows of metal clasps. First he moved one with his forefinger, then another, staring at this one and frowning at that one, recalling in its connection past occasions of comparative temperatures of air and river, of height and clearness of water, of sun and shade, while the angler's familiar feeling, of obscurity mingled with hope and frustration, came over him. While from the air he tried to conjure certainty for a choice of fly, Salar, who had taken several nymphs of the olive dun during the time the angler had been cogitating, leapt and fell back with a splash that made the old fellow take a small Black Doctor and tie the gut to the loop of the steel hook with a single Cairnton-jam knot.

Salar saw this lure and fixed one eye on it as it approached and then ignored it, a thing without life. As it was being withdrawn from the water a smolt which had seen it only then leapt openmouthed at a sudden glint and fell back, having missed it.

Many times a similar sort of thing moved over Salar, who no longer heeded their passing. He enjoyed crushing the tiny nymphs on his tongue, and tasting their flavor. Salar was not feeding, he was not hungry; but he was enjoying remembrance of his river life

with awareness of an unknown great excitement before him. He was living by the spirit of running water. Indeed Salar's life was now the river: as he explored it higher, so would he discover his life.

On the bank the fisherman sat down and perplexedly reëxamined his rows and rows of flies. He had tried all recommended for the water, and several others as well; and after one short rise, no fish had come to the fly. Mar Lodge and Silver Grey, Dunkeld and Black Fairy, Beauly Snow Fly, Fiery Brown, Silver Wilkinson, Thunder and Lightning, Butcher, Green Highlander, Blue Charm, Candlestick Maker, Bumbee, Little Inky Boy, all were no good. Then in one corner of the case he saw an old fly of which most of the mixed plumage was gone: a Black Dog which had belonged to his grandfather. Grubs of moths had fretted away hackle, wing, and topping. It was thin and bedraggled. Feeling that it did not matter much what fly was used, he sharpened the point with a slip of stone, tied it on, and carelessly flipped it into the water. He was no longer fishing; he was no longer intent, he was about to go home; the cast did not fall straight, but crooked; the line also was crooked. Without splash the fly moved down a little less fast than the current, coming thus into Salar's skylight. It was like the nymphs he had been taking, only larger; and with a leisurely sweep he rose and turned across the current, and took it, holding it between tongue and vomer as he went down to his lie again, where he

would crush and taste it. The sudden resistance of the line to his movement caused the point of the hook to prick the corner of his mouth. He shook his head to rid himself of it, and this action drove the point into the gristle, as far as the barb.

A moment later, the fisherman, feeling a weight on the line, lifted the rod point, and tightened the line, and had hardly thought to himself, "Salmon," when the blue-grey tail of a fish broke half out of water and its descending weight bended the rod.

Salar knew of neither fisherman nor rod nor line. He swam down to the ledge of rock and tried to rub the painful thing in the corner of his mouth against it. But his head was pulled away from the rock. He saw the line, and was fearful of it. He bored down to his lodge at the base of the rock, to get away from the line, while the small brown trout swam behind his tail, curious to know what was happening.

Salar could not reach his lodge. He shook his head violently, and, failing to get free, turned downstream and swam away strongly, pursued by the line and a curious buzzing vibration just outside his jaw.

Below the pool the shallow water jabbled before surging in broken white crests over a succession of rocky ledges. Salar had gone about sixty yards from his lodge, swimming hard against the backward pull of line, when the pull slackened, and he turned head to current, and lay close to a stone, to hide from his enemy.

When the salmon had almost reached the jabble, the fisherman, fearing it would break away in the rough water, had started to run down the bank, pulling line from the reel as he did so. By thus releasing direct pull on the fish, he had turned it. Then, by letting the current drag line in a loop below it, he made Salar believe that the enemy was behind him. Feeling the small pull of the line from behind, Salar swam up into deeper water, to get away from it. The fisherman was now behind the salmon, in a position to make it tire itself by swimming upstream against the current.

Salar, returning to his lodge, saw it occupied by another fish, which his rush, and the humming line cutting the water, had disturbed from the lie by the sodden log. This was Gralaks the grilse. Again Salar tried to rub the thing against the rock, again the pull, sideways and upwards, was too strong for him. He swam downwards, but could make no progress towards the rock. This terrified him and he turned upwards and swam with all his strength, to shake it from his mouth. He leapt clear of the water and fell back on his side, still shaking his head.

On the top of the leap the fisherman had lowered his rod, lest the fly be torn away as the salmon struck the water.

Unable to get free by leaping, Salar sank down again and settled himself to swim away from the enemy. Drawing the line after him, and beset again by the buzzing vibration, he traveled a hundred yards

to the throat of the pool, where water quickened over gravel. He lay in the riffle spreading away from a large stone, making himself heavy, his swim-bladder shrunken, trying to press himself into the gravel which was his first hiding place in life. The backward pull on his head nearly lifted him into the fast water, but he held himself down, for nearly five minutes, until his body ached and he weakened and he found himself being taken down sideways by the force of shallow water. He recalled the sunken tree and it became a refuge, and he swam down fast, and the pull ceased with the buzz against his jaw. Feeling relief, he swam less fast over his lodge, from which Gralaks sped away, alarmed by the line following Salar.

But before he could reach the tree the weight was pulling him back, and he turned and bored down to bottom, scattering a drove of little grey shadows which were startled trout. Again the pull was too much for him, and he felt the ache of his body spreading back to his tail. He tried to turn on his side to rub the corner of his mouth on something lying on the bed of the pool—an old cartwheel—again and again, but he could not reach it.

A jackdaw flying silent over the river, paper in beak for nest lining, saw the dull yellow flashes and flew faster in alarm of them and the man with the long curving danger.

Fatigued and aching, Salar turned downstream once

more, to swim away with the river, to escape the enemy which seemed so much bigger because he could not close his mouth. As he grew heavier, slower, uncertain, he desired above all to be in the deeps of the sea, to lie on ribbed sand and rest and rest and rest. He came to rough water, and let it take him down, too tired to swim. He bumped into a rock, and was carried by the current around it, on his side, while the gut cast, tautened by the dragging weight, twanged and jerked his head upstream, and he breathed again, gulping water quickly and irregularly. Still the pull was trying to take him forward, so with a renewal by fear he turned and reëntered fast water and went down and down, until he was in another deep pool at a bend of the river. Here he remembered a hole under the roots of a tree, and tried to hide there, but had not strength enough to reach the refuge of darkness.

Again he felt release, and swam forward slowly, seeking the deepest part of the pool, to lie on the bottom with his mouth open. Then he was on his side, dazed and weary, and the broken-quicksilvery surface of the pool was becoming whiter. He tried to swim away, but the water was too thick-heavy; and after a dozen sinuations it became solid. His head was out of water. A shock passed through him as he tried to breathe. He lay there, held by line taut over fisherman's shoulder. He felt himself being drawn along just under the surface, and only then did he see his

enemy—flattened, tremulant-spreading image of the fisherman. A new power of fear broke in the darkness of his lost self. When it saw the tailer coming down to it, the surface of the water was lashed by the desperately scattered self. The weight of the body falling over backwards struck the taut line; the tail fin was split. The gut broke just above the hook, where it had been frayed on the rock. Salar saw himself sinking down into the pool, and he lay there, scattered about himself and unable to move away, his tail curved round a stone, feeling only a distorted head joined to the immovable river bed.

PETE AND THE BIG TROUT

by Henry Ward Beecher

PETE AIN'T GROWED AWAY FROM NATUR' SO FAR BUT what he knows what's goin' on in beast and bird. There ain't his equal at fishin' in these parts. The fish just cum, I do believe, and ask him to catch 'em.

He don't take on airs about it neither. He ain't stingy. He'd just as soon take you to the best brooks and the best places as not. But then that's nothin'. Very like you can't catch fish. The trout knows who's after 'em. They want Pete to catch 'em, not Tom, Dick, and Harry.

You mind the time he caught that trout out of Hulcomb's mill-pond, don't you?— No? Well, it had been known that there was an awful big fellow living in there. And I know a hundred folks had tried for him. Gentlemen had come up from New Haven, and from Bridgeport, and from down to New York, a-fishin', and ever so many had wound up by tryin' their luck for that big trout, and they had all sorts of

riggin'. One he tried flies, and another worms; sometimes they took the mornin', and sometimes the evenin'. They knew the hole where he lay. He'd been seen breaking the water for one thing and another, but allus when nobody was fishin'. He was a curious trout. I believe he knew Sunday just as well as Deacon Marble did. At any rate the deacon thought the trout meant to aggravate him. The deacon, you know, is a little waggish. He often tells about that trout. Sez he: "One Sunday morning, just as I got along by the willows, I heard an awful splash, and not ten feet from the shore I saw the trout, as long as my arm, just curving over like a bow, and going down with something for breakfast. 'Gracious!' says I, and I almost jumped out of the wagon. But my wife Polly, says she, 'What on airth are you thinkin' of, Deacon? It's Sabbath-day, and you're goin' to meetin'! It's pretty business for a deacon!' That sort of talk cooled me off. But I do say, that for about a minute I wished I wasn't a deacon. But 'twouldn't make any difference, for I came down next day to mill on purpose, and I came down once or twice more, and nothin' was to be seen, tho' I tried him with the most temptin' things. Wall, next Sunday I came along agin, and to save my life I couldn't keep off worldly and wandering thoughts. I tried to be sayin' my Catechism. But I couldn't keep my eyes off the pond as we came to the willows. I'd got along in the Catechism as smooth as the road, to the Fourth Commandment, and was sayin' out loud for

Polly, and just as I was sayin': 'What is required in the Fourth Commandment?' I heard a splash, and there was the trout, and afore I could think, I said, 'Gracious, Polly; I must have that trout.' She almost riz right up: 'I knew you wasn't sayin' your Catechism hearty. Is this the way you answer the question about keepin' the Lord's day? I'm ashamed, Deacon Marble,' says she. 'You'd better change your road, and go to meetin' on the road over the hill. If I was a deacon, I wouldn't let a fish's tail whisk the whole Catechism out of my head';—and I had to go to meetin' on the hill road all rest of the summer."

Wall, Pete worked down to the mill for a week or two—that's as long as he stays anywhere, except at Dr. Wentworth's, and he lets him come and go about as he pleases. And so, one day, says he: "I'm goin' to catch that big trout." So, after the sun was gone down, and just as the moon riz and lighted up the tops of the bushes, but didn't touch the water—Pete, he took a little mouse he'd caught, and hooked his hook through his skin, on the back, so that it didn't hurt him or hinder his being lively, and he threw him in about as far as a mouse could have jumped from the branches that hung over. Of course, the mouse he put out lively to swim for his life. Quick as a flash of lightnin', the water opened with a rush, and the mouse went under; but he came up again, and the trout with him, and he weighed between three and four pounds.

IT WAS ON THE ALLAGASH

by DeWitt Mackenzie

So you want a story about fishin'?

Well, that strikes a sympathetic chord with me, for there's a grand thrill in the swirl of the speckled beauty as he strikes at the well-placed fly; there's no music lovelier than the song of a fast running reel; and there's no rest so sweet as that brought by the pine-scented breezes as you tuck your tired but happy body into the old sleeping-bag after a glorious day in God's open spaces.

Draw in a little closer to the camp-fire, then, and I'll spin you a yarn of the greatest fishin' trip I've ever had during golden years of angling in many countries of the two hemispheres. That was last June, amidst the lakes and streams of the famous Allagash region of northern Maine—dreamland of fly fishermen.

The success of this expedition into one of the wild regions of the United States was due to a very special circumstance unique in my experience. It wasn't that

we caught a lot of fish, though we landed so many trout that we were returning them to the waters unharmed, because we couldn't eat them all and there was nobody in that primitive section to whom we could give them. It wasn't that they were big, though we took some magnificent ones and I was lucky enough to get the prize with a hard-battling fellow who dragged my scales down to eight pounds. But I'm getting involved. The story really begins this way:

When it finally was decided that I could go into the Allagash wilds, I had an inspiration. There is in our home a son of thirteen who was christened Kent Robert but wears the nickname of Major. Now it's an unfortunate circumstance—over which nobody had any control—that much of his young life he and I have been separated, because of my travels abroad. The result was that when things settled down a bit early this year, after my 35,000 mile aerial trip through the war zones, and we finally got together we found that we were pretty much strangers. And that's a mighty unhappy position for son and father to be in.

Being a great believer in the power of fishin' to cure many of the world's ills, it came to me that the tumbling waters of the Allagash might solve the difficulties of the little Major and me. When he was no more than chin-high to a johnny-cake I had bought him a small fly-rod and had taught him to cast a fly on the lawn.

When I broached the subject by mail to my prospective guides, they promptly demurred. The Major was pretty young for such a rough trip. However, after some debate they finally agreed reluctantly, and that left me with only one other worry. The youngster would have to be taken out of school just as final examinations were in hand for the annual promotion, and that put a knotty decision up to his school principal.

There are a lot of kind and understanding people in this world—Hitler and Mussolini and Tojo notwithstanding. When I set down my problem for the principal, he didn't hesitate for even the fraction of a minute, but his voice was husky as he said:

"You take him! I'd rather see you and the boy go on that trip together than anything I know. It will be a wonderful thing for both of you. Let me have him for another week if you can, but if that isn't feasible —you two go right ahead and everything will be all right."

Well, we managed to work the exams in, and so on a smiling June morning we boarded the train for Maine, complete with rods and shining faces. As we settled into our seats and started what was to be the most memorable experience of our lives, the Major looked at me with a quizzical and rather diffident little grin and said:

"I hope we're going to get some good fishin', Daddy."

And being endowed in some degree with the gift of prophecy, I replied:

"You bet we are! It's going to be the finest fishin' we ever imagined."

It was, too.

We packed in to the headwaters of the famous Allagash with canoes and full camping outfit which was chosen with meticulous care, for we were going into a country so wild that if one had forgotten any necessity, that was very bad luck. In that region, you know, if a tenderfoot walks a quarter of a mile off the trail and gets turned around, he's lost—perhaps forever.

My youngster—whose nickname of Major followed him into the forest primeval—and I struck a bit of rare fortune, for we were lucky enough to spend part of our memorable holiday in the company of three of Maine's most famous fish and game wardens, who happened to be going into the Allagash area in pursuit of their duties. There was Levi Dow, warden supervisor for 700 square miles of northern Maine, "Cash" Austen and Curtis Cooper—all old-timers, schooled in the ways of the woods and wise in the lore of beast, bird and fish. They are a grand trio, and from them the Major and I learned much.

The Allagash takes its source in northwest Maine, and swells into numerous ponds and lakes as it makes its tortuous way northward until it joins the St. John,

to slip across the border into Canada. There's magnificent scenery along its route.

At times the river works itself into a frenzy of rips, as they call the boiling waters which would be rapids if they ran a bit bigger and fiercer. There are the dangerous but beautiful Allagash falls. And as one slips silently down the broad bosomed stream in the canoe there open up vistas more lovely than an artist's dream. But I'm almost forgetting that I'm a fisherman and not a painter.

The Major and I devoted most of our time to fly fishin' with light rods, and we had good luck. We did some trolling, however, and it was in beautiful little Cliff Lake that I got the big togue on a red and silver daredevil spoon. He fought well—and he "ate" well, too, for that night "Cash" Austen filleted him and grilled him with salt pork before an open fire next to the abandoned logger's cabin in which we slept. We had speckled trout, also, and boiled potatoes and corn bread. Boy, can "Cash" cook!

Then there was some fishin' which was just too good to be fun, and I mean that. For instance, we spent one day by the great dam at Round Pond, and you could take big trout out of the boiling waters below the dam as fast as you cast in.

We killed what we wanted to eat, threw back others which we had taken on small hooks without hurt, and then—believe it or not—sailed on down the Allagash with the trout still rising. It reminded me of

one day in Norway when I caught over a hundred trout on flies in three hours or so, threw back seventy-five of them alive, and then quit because I was fed up with it.

The Major and I got the best sport in the rips. Some of them we fished as we waded along the edge of the river and cast out into the white-capped waves. At other times we fished these near-rapids from canoes, held by men in the sterns. There's a special thrill in picking a fast-striking trout right off the crest of a rip, and then battling to get him up through the rough water to the net. By the by, we found a small red and white Parmachene bucktail popular with the fish, and I've had good luck with that lure in numerous other waters.

Well, in this manner we worked our way down the river, and always there was in my mind the thought that the real purpose of the trip was to give son and father a chance to get acquainted. And how could we help being drawn together? There's a real comradeship in such an adventure, where each member of the party has to bear his full share for the safety and well-being of all.

So the Major and his dad began to know each other. There were wonderful chummy moments in the evening as our little expedition sat about the campfire spinning yarns. There were long tramps on the wood trails, when we talked of the future, or marveled at the tracks of bear and moose and deer. And

finally when the long day was done, and we two snuggled into our sleeping-bags, side by side, there was the "Good night, Daddy"—"Good night, old chap"—which meant a lot more than could be packed into a book of fine words.

At last came the time when we boarded our train in the far north for home. As we pulled out of the station the Major looked up at me and, no longer diffident but as man to man, remarked:

"It's been a wonderful trip, Daddy. Thank you for taking me on it. I hope we can go again."

"You bet we can—every year of our lives," I promised, and I meant it.

BUTTERFLIES AND BROWN TROUT

by Compton Mackenzie and Moray McLaren

(Note: *The following broadcast on the delights of youthful pursuits was given by the authors over the British Broadcasting Corporation's network.*)

Moray McLaren: The most enduring and the most completely satisfying pleasure known to man, and particularly Scotsmen, is the catching of fish.

Compton Mackenzie: I deny that sweeping assumption. There are plenty of other superior pursuits both for grown men and for young people—but since we are supposed to be talking about our youth I put forward a claim for butterfly hunting.

M. M.: And I the catching of fish, especially brown trout.

C. M.: At any rate, you can eat what you catch; I give you that.

M. M.: The superiority of fishing over all other sports, apart from its other advantages, lies in the

mystery contained in it. While it is true that there are more fish in the sea than ever came out of it, there are more kinds, also. When you cast your line into some pool or loch you never know what you are going to catch.

C. M.: Possibly the Loch Ness monster!

M. M.: Well, possibly, but more probably some equally exciting silver giant newly arrived from the sea or some dark old peat-stained ferox. . . .

C. M.: Cease to dream, Moray, and give me some concrete examples of the pleasures you recollect. Then we can make comparisons.

M. M.: Very well. I will try to recapture one or two important hours for you. Since, as you reminded me, we are supposed to be talking about our youth, let us go back a number of years. First, I ask you to imagine a small boy on a fine autumn day in the West Highlands of Scotland. He has a seven-and-six-penny two-piece rod bought at a local grocery store. Attached to it there is a length of coarse brown line of a kind used for the making of sea-nets, and at the end of this line there is a totally inappropriate yard of very fine and probably rotten gut. At any rate, it certainly has not been wetted.

The small boy is walking up one of those water-ways with which you must be so familiar. They are half burns, half streams. That is to say, in the summertime they are hardly more than trickles of water. In winter they are fully fledged cataracts.

One element of their streamhood, however, remains. Every three hundred yards or so there are deep, dark pools to remind you even in high summer of the torrent which flows in the wetter days. The small boy has seen one or two fish caught and is filled with curiosity and desires to know more about this pleasure. He throws a worm in advance of him in an inexpert way and into the wrong places.

There is not a sign of anything. There can surely be no life in *this* stream. Nevertheless, the drowsy enchantment of the late autumn day lures him on up the path of the waterway and into the silence of the hills.

He comes to the biggest pool of all, dark, peat-stained, with stale yellow foam at the fringes. He throws in his bait, not really expecting anything, when quite suddenly there comes a tug. It is a tug which he has felt first with his fingers, then with his arms, then right down his whole body to his feet. He can still feel it now after a lapse of more years than he cares to count.

There is a momentary struggle, then the rod is raised with all the strength that he possesses in an effort to throw the fish out on to the bank. Of course the gut breaks. The mystery of the origin of that tug and that struggle will remain forever unsolved. But the point is that it is a mystery that has haunted him all his life. I still believe that it was not just any ordinary little brown trout, but some monster from

the sea, possibly even a salmon which had elbowed his way up into this hilly pool. At any rate, whatever it was, it fixed my inclinations in one matter for life, and all my fishing experiences since then have been a search for this lost fish.

The second moment I give you is at a later stage.

A year or two before the war I was in a boat on a small loch (hardly larger than Trafalgar Square). The loch was in the middle of an island off the north coast of Scotland. The time was midnight on Midsummer Eve and everything was still. It seemed that the whole world was waiting in breathless silence for the moment of the change of the year.

My boat floated as motionless as a water-lily on the surface of the water. What I was waiting for was the beginning of the morning rise of trout on Midsummer Day.

As I sat there and waited I watched a transformation, or, rather, transcoloration, of the landscape. You know, don't you, the garish colors of the north at midsummer? How scarlet the poppies are, how bright the yellow of the pernicious mustard plant, how green the grass, and how translucent the blue of sky and sea and fresh water! Well, as the brief northern night descended all that seemed to happen was that the color ebbed from the scene and everything became the color of a film, *not* in glorious Technicolor.

Then, with the returning day (which seemed to come in a few moments), the blood of color flowed

back into the scene, into the poppies, the mustard, the sea, and the sky. When this the long-expected event occurred—the morning rise began. The whole of the little loch seemed to boil with an activity of trout that came up from its depths.

Wherever and whenever I cast, I hooked, I fought, I conquered. An hour of pure pleasure I passed. And though I did not catch the missed monster of my childhood, I was in a sense satisfied.

C. M.: I think that mysterious lost fish of yours with a tug was probably a stone. Still, what does it matter?

M. M.: I said there was a tug *and* a struggle.

C. M.: Well, well. We must not enter into an angling argument. I shall grant right away the magic of your youthful fishing adventures and I shall admit, as I said before, the satisfaction of being able to eat what you caught. One can't, or, at any rate, one *doesn't* eat butterflies. They remain beautiful in a cork-lined box.

M. M.: Fish are stuffed and put in glass cases.

C. M.: Yes, but, Moray, a stuffed fish is ugly. It's one of the stock illustrations of dreariness—the stuffed fish and the aspidistra and the antimacassar. However, I'm being competitive again.

My passion for butterfly hunting began with the summer holidays of 1894 which were spent in Brittany. I was eleven years old, and I came back alone from St. Malo in a silvery September mist which

turned to rain when we landed at Southampton. In my luggage were eleven cigar boxes—the only receptacles I could find in which to carry back my collection.

In those days the Customs shed at Southampton protected only the Customs officers. The wretched voyagers had to stand in the rain and mud while their luggage was being examined. I was told to open my bag, and when the official saw the cigar boxes he asked why I had not declared my contraband.

"They're butterflies," I squeaked.

"Open the boxes!" he snapped.

They had all been carefully nailed up for the voyage and my small fingers fumbled with the lids. The official snatched the box from me and forced it open with a jerk, so that the pins came unstuck and the butterflies were in a jumble. And it was raining on their bright wings which had been set with such care.

You'd have thought that when one box turned out to be what it was said to be the other ten would have been passed. But no, that Customs fellow opened every one and left me to fasten them up as best I could and get them to the train. Of course the collection was ruined. Nevertheless, the experience was valuable. It instilled in me a prejudice against officialdom which has been a tonic all through my life. Hunting officials is as much fun as hunting butterflies. I cannot think why so many people let officials hunt them.

Your point about the mystery of fishing is a good one, but the butterfly out of reach provides as much excitement as any fish.

I remember in a long avenue beyond the Golden Pot Inn, some three or four miles from Alton, in Hampshire, seeing a White Admiral flying about twenty feet up. I could keep pace with it at a jog-trot because the White Admiral is not a rapid flyer, and I reckoned that when it came to the end of the avenue it would drop down to a lower level. Not a bit of it. As soon as that confounded White Admiral reached the end of the avenue it turned round and flew back the length of it—a mile at least. And then it turned round again; but this time when it came to the end it rose higher and higher and floated away over the treetops into the unattainable.

White Admirals were very rare in those days. I'm told they have much increased of recent years.

There is one butterfly, by the way, which one lures with bait in your fisherman's manner. That's the Purple Emperor. He frequents the tops of oak trees, and you stand no chance of netting him without a piece of decayed meat, on which he will descend to settle and enjoy the rank odor. Then he's an easy victim.

There is another butterfly which is carnivorous.

M. M.: I don't believe it.

C. M.: Oh, yes, it really is! And it's a very remarkable business because it has only been discovered

within the last twenty years. This butterfly is called the Large Blue—I forget the Latin name—and it frequents the chalky downs in Hampshire and Sussex, and the caterpillar feeds on thyme—"I know a bank whereon the wild thyme grows."

As a boy I have often found caterpillars of the Large Blue and have taken them home and fed them dutifully on thyme, hoping they would turn into chrysalises. But they never did; they always died.

And they died on everybody—until someone, whose name I have disgracefully forgotten, discovered that the caterpillar of the Large Blue gets tired of its vegetarian diet and leaves the banks of thyme and crawls along until it meets an ant. When it does then it puts itself in a rather queer hunched position and oozes a drop of honey dew. Other ants arrive and the party grows merry. Finally the caterpillar is gathered up by a company of rather intoxicated ants and carried off to their nest.

When it arrives in the underworld it proceeds to repay its hosts by eating the ant grub until it pupates. It remains hidden away in the underworld until the season for hatching, when it emerges from its chrysalis, still down in the ant heap, and makes its way out of this maze toward the sunlight.

As it moves the ants all rush at it to bite it to death. But its body is covered with a sort of wettish fluff rather like mildew, and this the ants cannot tear off in time before the butterfly reaches the sunlight. As

it emerges from the ant heap the last bit of fluff is gone—it's beautifully timed. Then the Large Blue spreads its wings and flies off like a minute bit of heaven.

M. M.: Is that really a true story?

C. M.: Yes, it really is. You can read all about it in any of the latest butterfly books. But talking of possibilities, would you suppose it was possible to train butterflies?

M. M.: Well, I suppose you could train anything.

C. M.: Many years ago I succeeded in training four Red Admirals to alight on my hand and accept honey from me. I fed them as caterpillars until they pupated, and when they emerged from the chrysalis stage I kept them in the breeding cage until they had learnt to find the honey on my finger.

A week or so later I took the cage into the garden and left the door open. They flew out one by one, but came back for the honey; and for a fortnight of lovely late-summer weather these Red Admirals used to come sailing down to sit upon my hand and suck the honey, their outspread velvety wings all a-quiver with sensuous greed—the way you'll see them feeding on the juice of rotten plums.

The feel of a butterfly walking on the back of one's hand is a most delicious experience.

And butterflies have such lovely names, both in English and in Latin, too, because they are called after gods and goddesses, nymphs, muses, shepherds, and

famous queens. The Red Admiral, for instance, is Vanessa Atlanta, and in Southern Europe there's a Brimstone with an orange splash upon its vivid lemon wings called Cleopatra. Then there are the Mazarin Blue and the Silver-studded Blue, and the Silver-washed Fritillary, whose caterpillar feeds on violets, and the Queen of Spain Fritillary. I never had the luck to see her upon the wing, but at Burford there used to be plenty of Greasy Fritillaries in the water meadows beside the Windrush. To you the Windrush babbles of trout; to me it babbles of flowers and butterflies. And, you know, loach, roach, chub, even trout, are not beautiful names.

It was at Burford that I had the most exciting butterfly chase of my life. It was bank holiday in the year 1905. On my way to play in a cricket match I came back to fetch something from the library of the house I shared with Christopher Stone—and I saw upon my desk a Camberwell Beauty.

You know, I hope, that a Camberwell Beauty is nowadays just a very rare migrant to England, though once upon a time it seems to have been common among the willows of an unbuilt-over Camberwell. The caterpillar feeds on the willow.

Imagine the way my heart beat when I saw this wonderful creature twitching its great dark cream-colored wings upon my desk which stood by the open window of the room. What I should have done, of course, was to hurry and shut that window. But I was

so excited that I made a dash to catch the butterfly with my panama hat—and missed it.

Out of the window sailed the Camberwell Beauty, and, snatching up my hat, out the window I followed, to scramble down an ancient pear tree into the garden and hunt as noble a quarry as anybody could wish to hunt.

The Camberwell Beauty flew high. Down the garden I ran; out through the gate between two small houses, over the road and into the fields beyond it—on, on, on until the Camberwell Beauty, flying, it seemed, even higher and faster, became a speck against the western sky. On, on, on I ran, until I realized that I was pursuing the empty air, and flung myself down beside the Windrush to regain my breath and curse myself for not having shut the window before I tried to get the lovely rare one under my hat. Then I walked sadly back, and with a diamond pencil inscribed upon the window through which it flew out of my reach a record of the fact. Last time I visited Lady Ham that pane was still unbroken.

Well, both of us seem to have been rhapsodizing about the fish and butterflies we failed to catch. And I think that points to a moral. No philatelist rhapsodizes about a stamp he failed to acquire: he must collect it.

M. M.: Well, perhaps you're right. At any rate, whether fishermen or lepidopterists are collectors or whether they aren't, we have certainly been recollect-

ing some of the days of our youth, since when, for my own part, I have agreed with Izaak Walton's thoughts on fishing:

'Tis an employment for my idle time, which
is not then idly spent;
a rest of my mind;
a cheerer of my spirit;
a diverter of sadness;
a calmer of unquiet thoughts;
a moderator of passions;
a procurer of contentedness.

These needs are ever present and changeless in a changing world. They represent sanity in a mad world; they are real. And in this brief escape to reality I think we can congratulate ourselves on an enjoyable experience, even if everyone else has been so bored that they have all switched off and we have been left talking to each other in this padded cell alone and unheard. Though in saying this I wonder whether you have the right to recollect or recapture your youth. I don't believe you have ever lost it. How do you manage it?

C. M.: By not taking exercise. Let me give you this infallible rule for keeping your youth. Never run when you can walk; never walk when you can stand still; never stand when you can sit, and never sit when you can lie down.

TROUTING ALONG THE CATASAUQUA

by Frank Forester

"And this 'clattering creek,' what sort of water is it?" asked Frank; "that I may learn at once the whole lay of the land."

"A real mountain burn."

"I'm thinking of trying it myself to-morrow," said Robins. "Mr. Langdale tells me it can only be fished with bait, and that's what I'm best at. Besides, there are bigger fish in it."

"But fewer," answered Langdale. "No, Robins, I'd advise you to stick to the 'Stony,' unless you'll try a cast of the fly with us over the pool and down the Catasauqua."

"No, no," replied St. Clair, half indignantly, "none of your flies for me, and no canoe-work. But why do you advise me against it? You said there were no trees, bait-fishing and big fish. What is there against it?"

"The toughest crag-climbing and the most difficult fishing you ever tried."

"What like fishing is it, Lancelot?" asked Frank.

"Exactly what that capital sportsman, Colquhoon of Luss, describes in his excellent book, the 'Moor and Loch,' under the title of the 'Moorburn'."

"I remember," replied Frank. "Is it as bad as that?"

"Worse; but the fish much larger. I have caught them up to two pounds."

"I should like to hear about that. Can't you read it to me?" asked the Wall-street man, eager for information.

"I've no objection," said Langdale, "if Frank has not. He has read it fifty times already."

"I'm convenient," answered Frank, laying down his knife and fork, the last duck having disappeared.

"Well, then, here goes. Now, Scipio, look alive and clear away the table; bring us our pipes and coffee; and then we'll to bed, for we must be afoot by daybreak."

And with the word he rose, and, after turning over a few volumes on his crowded shelves, brought down the volume in question, with its pages underlined, and interlined, and filled with marginal notes and references. This done, he ensconced himself in the chimney corner, threw on a fresh log, and read as follows:

" 'In most of the small Highland burns, there is a succession of cataracts and pools, with a parapet of rock rising perpendicularly on each side, and often

scarcely footing enough for a dog to pass. The greater proportion of picturesque-looking brethren of the angle would almost start at the idea of continuing their pastime under such disadvantages. They therefore make a circuit, and come down again upon the burn, where it is more easy to fish, and the ground less rugged. The trout in these places are thus left until many of them grow large, and each taking possession of a favorite nook, drives all the smaller fry away. The difficulty of reaching these places is, I admit, often great, the angler having sometimes to scramble up on his hands and knees, covered with wet moss or gravel, and then drag his fishing-rod after him. These lyns should always be fished up-stream, otherwise the moment you appear at the top of the waterfall or rock, the trout are very like to see you, and slink into their hiding-place. The burn, however, must always be low, as at no other time can you distinguish the snug retreat of these little tyrants, which, indeed, they often leave, during the slightest flood, in search of prey. By fishing up the stream, your head will be on a level with the different eddies and pools, as they successively present themselves, and the rest of your person out of sight. Hold the baited hook with the left hand, jerking out the rod, underhanded, with your right, so as to make the bait fall softly at the lower end of the pool. The trout always take their station either there or at the top where the water flows in, ready to pounce on worms, snails, slugs, etc., as

they enter or leave the pool. Should a trout seize the bait, a little time may be given to allow it to gorge, which it will most likely do without much ceremony. If large, care must be taken to prevent it from getting to the top of the lyn, which may probably harbor another expectant. The best plan is, if possible, to persuade it to descend into the pool below. Having deposited the half-pounder in your creel, you will now crawl upon hands and knees, just so near the top of the lyn as will enable you to drop the bait immediately below the bubbling foam, nearly as favorite a station for an overgrown, monopolizing trout as the other. Except in such situations, the burn trout seldom exceeds a quarter of a pound, and may be pulled out with single gut, without much risk of breaking it. In these lyns, however, I have occasionally taken them upward of a pound, which is easily accounted for. As soon as the trout grows to a sufficient size to intimidate his pigmy neighbors, he falls back into the best pool for feeding, not occupied by a greater giant than himself, and as these lyns are almost always in precipices very difficult of access, he remains undisturbed and alone, or with a single companion, driving all others away, until he may at last attain to a pound weight.'

"Now, I fear, brother angler, that you are in some respects what the indefatigable Gael would call a 'picturesque angler'; so I advise you in good faith, stick to the 'Stony Brook'; fish it from the long fall

carefully down. Scipio shall attend you with the landing-net and plenty of worms and minnows; the last, hooked through the lip and back fin, will do you yeoman service in the lower pools; and Frank and I will join you in the afternoon."

"Agreed," said Mr. Robins; "I'll take your advice, I believe; and now I guess I'll turn in. Good night."

"Time, too," said Frank, laughing. "He was beginning to get a little white about the gills. Could that be his old Otard; he did not drink so much of it."

"Lord help you, no! he'd drink a gallon of it and no hurt. No! But he will persist in smoking Cavendish tobacco and kinnikinnic, because he has seen me do it, and, I believe, imagines that it confers some special powers of trout-catching. But come, suppose we turn in, too; you'll be tired after your journey, and a good night's rest will give a steady hand and clear eye to-morrow."

"*Volontiers.*"

So they incontinently joined the Wall-street man, who declared, half asleep, that the bed was not so very bad, after all; while Frank, once ensconced in the fragrant sheets, swore, by the great god Pan, patron of hunters, that never had bed so sweet, so soft, so warm, in every way so excellent, received the limbs of weary hunter. And so, indeed, it proved; for, until Scipio made his entree, with his announcement, "Breakfast soon be ready, Massa; sun h'em 'mose up

now," no one stirred or spoke during the livelong night.

Thereon they all turned, like the Iron Duke, not over, but out. Their sporting toilets were soon made; but Frank and Lancelot, in their old shepherd's plaid jackets and trews and hob-nailed fishing shoes, could not but exchange glances and smiles at the elaborate rig of their friend, which some Broadway artist had, it was evident, elaborated from a Parisian fashion-plate, the high boots of exquisitely enamelled leather, the fine doeskin trousers, the many-pocketed, pearl-buttoned shooting jacket of fawn-colored silk plush, the batiste neckerchief and waistcoat, point device, with green and silver fishes embroidered on a blue ground, and, to complete the whole, a cavalier hat, in which, but that it lacked the king's black feather, Rupert might well have charged at Marston Moor or Naseby. He seemed, however, so happy, that it would have been as useless as ill-natured to indoctrinate him; for evidently, as an angler, the man was hopelessly incurable, though, as Frank observed, for Wall-street, he was wonderfully decent.

His weapon was a right good Conroy's general-fishing rod, but without reel, and having its line, an unusually stout silk one, with a superb salmon-gut bottom, which, in good hands, would have held a twenty-pounder, made carefully fast to the top funnel; eschewing all use of the ring and destroying all

chance of the rod's regularly bending to its work. But again, to counsel would have been to offend; so our friends held their peace.

The smoked venison ham, broiled troutlings, dry toast and black tea, which furnished their morning meal, were soon finished; and forth they went into the delicious, breezy air of the quiet summer morning, not a sound disturbing the solitude, except the plash and rippling of the rapid waters, the low voices of the never-silent pine-tops, and the twittering of the swallows, as they skimmed the limpid pool.

Up the gorge of the Stony Brook, followed by Scipio, with bait of all kinds enough to have kept the kraten fat for one day at least, a large creel at his back, and gaff and landing-net in hand, away went St. Clair Robins, gay and joyous and confident; and then, but not till then quoth Forester—

"And whither we?"

"To the other side of the pool. You may see the big fish rising under the alders, there, in the shadow of the big hill, from this distance. That shadow will hang there until noon, while all this side of the basin will be in blazing sunshine. Not a fish will bite here, I warrant me, until three o'clock, while we'll fill our basket there with good ones, certain. The best fish in the pool lies under that round-headed stone, just in the tail of the strong eddy, where the 'Clattering Creek' comes in, in the broken water. I rate him a six-pounder, and have saved him for you all the spring.

As soon as the sun turns westward, and the hemlocks' shadows cross the white water, you shall kill him, and then we'll away to the Wall-street man"; and therewith the larger birch canoe was manned, paddled gently over to the shady side of the pool and moored in about twenty-foot water, and then, the rods being put together, the reels secured and the lines carried duly through the rings, the following colloquy followed:

"What flies do you most affect here, Lancelot?" asked Frank.

"Any, at times, and almost all," answered Langdale. "In some weather I have killed well with middle-sized gaudy lake flies; but my favorites, on the whole, are all the red, brown, orange, and yellow hackles, and the blue and yellow duns. And yours?"

"My favorite of all is a snipe feather and mouse body; next to that the black and the furnace hackles."

"And will you use them to-day?"

"I will; the snipe wing for my stretcher. I mean to kill the big chap with him this evening."

"Be it so! to work."

And to work they went; but, though most glorious the sport to enjoy, or even to see performed gnostically, to read of it described, is as little interesting as to describe it is difficult. Suffice it to say, that before the sun had begun to turn westward, sixteen brace and a half were fairly brought to basket by our anglers, one a three-pound-and-a-halfer, three two-pounders, there

or there about; not a fish under a pound, all smaller were thrown back unscathed, and very few so small as that, all beautifully fed fish, big-bellied, small-headed, high in color, prime in condition. At one o'clock, they paddled leisurely back to the cabin, lunched frugally on a crust of bread and a glass of sherry, and awaited the hour when the hemlock's shadow should be on the white water.

At the moment they were there; and lo! the big trout was feeding fiercely on the natural fly.

"Be ready, Frank, and when next he rises drop your fly right in the middle of his bell."

"Be easy, I mean it." His line, as he spoke, was describing an easy circle around his head; the fish rose not. The second revolution succeeded; the great trout rose, missed his object, disappeared; and, on the instant, right in the centre of the bell, ere the inmost circle had subsided, the snipe feather fell and fluttered. With an arrowy rush, the monster rose, and as his broad tail showed above the surface, the merry music of the resonant click-reel told that Frank had him. Well struck, he was better played, killed unexceptionably; in thirteen minutes he lay fluttering on the greensward, lacking four ounces of a six-pounder. The snipe feather and mouse body won the day in a canter. So off they started up the Stony Brook, to admire the feats of P. St. Clair Robins. It was not long ere they found him; he had reached the lower waters of the brook, full of beautiful scours, eddies, whirl-

pools and basins, and was fishing quietly down it, wading about knee deep with his bait, he was roving with a minnow, some ten yards down the stream, playing naturally enough in the clear, swirling waters. Some trees on the bank hung thickly over his head; a few yards behind him was a pretty rocky cascade, and above that an open upland glade, lighted up by a gleam of the westering sun; and, altogether, with his gay garb, he presented quite a picturesque, if not a very sportsmanly appearance.

"After all," said Frank, as unseen themselves, they stood observing him, "he does not do it so very badly as one might have expected."

But before the words had passed his lips, a good fish, at least a pounder, threw itself clear out of the water and seized his minnow. In a second, in the twinkling of an eye, by a movement never before seen or contemplated by mortal angler, he ran his right hand up to the top of the third joint of his rod, which he held perpendicularly aloft, and with his left grasped his line, mid length, and essayed to drag the trout by main force out of his element. The tackle was stout, the stream strong, the bottom slippery, the fish active, and, before any one could see how it was done, hand and foot both slipped, the line parted, the rod crashed in the middle, the fish went over the next fall with a joyous flirt of his tail, and the fisherman, hapless fisherman, measured his own length in the deepest pool of the Stony Brook.

He was soon fished out, equipped in dry rigging, comforted with a hot glass of his favorite cognac; but he would not be consoled. He was off at daylight the following morning, and, for aught that I have heard, Cotton's Cabin beheld him nevermore.

THE FISHERMAN

by Martin Armstrong

THE ROAD, DIVING DOWNWARDS OFF THE BRIDGE, SLID away to the left; but tucked into a low recess on the right, so that it looked down upon the river and up at the high, foreshortened mass of the bridge, the George Inn opened its comfortable, L-shaped front, thick with climbing greenery. Behind it a flourishing kitchen-garden stood embanked above the river to which steps descended under a canopy of ancient elm-trees.

Michael Dunne, having finished his breakfast, appeared in the doorway and stood looking up at the sky. Then he lowered his eyes to the scene before him and slowly drew in his breath. It was delicious to be in the country again. The trees, loaded mound upon mound with fresh young green; the pervading hush of the river; the soft clean air tinged with the smell of wet earth and standing water breathed up from the river edge, thrilled him with indescribable delight. He

glanced again at the sky. It was bright, too bright, at present, but there were light clouds in the blue and a gentle breeze: there would certainly be intervals of dullness. Not, on the whole, a bad day for fishing. He had made up two fishing-casts overnight, seated in the bow-window of the sitting-room with half a dozen trout-flies hanging from his mouth. When the gut was sufficiently soaked, he drew out the flies one by one and carefully knotted them on to the cast. He had decided to use nothing but March Browns, and old Wales, the landlord, had entirely agreed when Dunne had mentioned it to him.

He was ready to start now at any moment, and he stood there in the doorway with his hands in his breeches-pockets, impatiently waiting for the sun to stop shining. From time to time in the inn behind him footsteps tapped along the stone-floored passage and died away. But at last he was roused by some that came closer and closer still and finally stopped just behind his back. He swung round. Somebody was waiting to be allowed to pass: a young woman. With a quick apology Dunne moved out of her way and she came out, thanking him with a smile as she passed him, and moved away along the front of the inn, a slim figure in a brown coat and skirt. A white-handled umbrella hung from her left arm: her right hand carried a camp-stool and a satchel.

Dunne stood watching her. It was as if in its flying course an invisible flame had swept over him, for the

brief glimpse of her face had thrilled him suddenly and profoundly. Only two or three times before had that curious experience befallen him, for he was not easily attracted by women. He stood now, immovable, gazing after her with flushed face, till she vanished round the corner of the house: then he turned back into the inn, his sense resounding with the impression of her. In a few minutes, he reappeared, preceded by the slim point of his rod. He had put on his waders and an old cap stuck with one or two gaudy salmon-flies; a creel hung at his left side. His emotion at the sight of the beautiful girl had died down; he was calm again, and now he began to make his way down the little garden path under the elm-trees, carefully pointing the wavering tip of the rod into the spaces between the thick hanging foliage. At the river's edge he paused to survey again the grey and golden bridge whose four stone arches towered above him a stone's throw away to his right. Under the two nearest, at this time of the year, there was nothing but dry gravel, thickly overgrown near the bank with a jungle of wild rhubarb. Under the third, the water, brown and clear as ale, babbled shallow over the pebbles. It was only under the fourth, where it washed the farther bank, that the water was deep.

Dunne clambered down, holding his rod carefully in front of him, and began to push through the great funnel-shaped rhubarb leaves. Then, crunching across the gravel-bed, he waded through the shallows to a

little island within a short cast of a round pool, the very place for a trout. He had watched them rising there on the previous evening as he stood, an hour after his arrival, leaning idly over the parapet of the bridge. It was a deep, round pool, slowly stirred by a circular eddy which swung the streaks of floating spume into narrowing whorls, so that it looked, from above, like a huge polished ammonite. He had decided to fish upstream from that point.

It was years, four years at least, since he had last had a day's fishing, but as he began casting up to the head of the pool, he recovered at once that delicious mood peculiar to the fisherman—a mood composed of conscious craft, expectation, and at the same time a quiet passivity laying the mind open to streams of thoughts and ideas which flow through the brain easily as the flowing of the river, washing it clean of complexities.

The breeze had almost died down. Not a fish was stirring. And, moving slowly upstream, he worked leisurely on for half an hour without getting a single bite. But just as he reached the lower end of another promising pool—a gently swirling pool fed by a narrow and copious flow—the breeze freshened again and the day clouded over. It was ideal now—grey, and with just the right purl on the water.

The fish were beginning to feed. A small one rose in the pool a few yards from where he stood; then, just under the bank, another, a larger one. The sudden

musical splash sounded clear and sharp above the monotonous babbling of the water. Then, as though his line were a nerve identifying the finger that held it with every movement of the floating fly, he felt three electric tugs. The end of his rod curved into a hoop, and he began to play the trout.

It was only, he knew at once, a small one—something over a quarter of a pound perhaps; and, though it fought gamely, as a trout always does, Dunne landed it at once. It lay for a moment motionless on the pebbles with helpless, gaping mouth: but as he stooped to take hold of it, suddenly it began to twist and wriggle, tense as a steel spring. Dunne caught it, grasping the firm, wincing body in his left hand while with his right he began to work the hook free of its mouth, twisting and wrenching the pale, talc-like flesh. Then, stooping again, he struck its head against a stone. It lay motionless in his palm now, a limp, exquisite shape of silver, gold, and brown. The delicate cucumber scent of it rose to his nostrils. Between a quarter and half a pound he thought, and dropped it into his creel.

A few minutes later, soon after he had begun to cast again, Dunne experienced a curious repetition of the physical sensation of striking the soft, unresisting creature against the stone. A little shudder ran through his vitals. Curious! Could it have been something disagreeable in the sound of it, or in the sense of the too hard striking the too soft? He shuddered again, but less perceptibly, and then the cease-

less tinkle of the water smoothed the faint scar from his mind. Peaceably, incoherently his thoughts swirled with the swirling clusters of bubbles.

But soon he was thinking coherently again. What was it that happened when he struck the trout's head against the stone and all its exquisite mechanism stopped for ever? Was it nothing more than that he broke the delicate motor housed in the little box in the skull? No more than the smashing of a watch? Years ago, old Mr. Worston, the peppery old gentleman who always gave him a sovereign when he went back to school after the summer holidays, smashed his watch against the wall in Hexham station because it was slow and had made him miss the express. Smash! Swinging it the full length of the heavy gold chain. A pulp of little gold wheels and broken glass. Delightful thought! It had delighted him as a boy and it delighted him still. But a watch is hard. To smash something hard . . . a bottle or an egg against a wall . . . how satisfying! But to hit a fish . . . a limp, soft fish . . . and alive! Another faint shudder. All the leaves on the river bank hissed and rustled suddenly: hurrying grey spearheads shot along the surface of the stream. The wind was freshening.

A twitch. A palpitating tug. He had hooked another; and a few minutes after that there was another, and then another—a much larger one. Such a game one it was that Dunne thought for a moment that it must be a salmon-trout. When he landed it, the hook was

fixed in the extreme tip of the lower jaw: it was a wonder it had held. A fine fish, fully a pound, the tarnished silver sides spotted with rose. Dunne gazed at it fascinated, curiously inspecting the staring, expressionless eyes, set like the work of a master jeweller in the subtly moulded bronze of the head. The slippery body thrilled and stiffened spasmodically in his clenched fingers. Its slipperiness was beginning already to grow viscous against his palm. The foolish mouth gaped patiently, sufferingly, and Dunne suddenly recalled the blanched, tight-lipped mouth of a dying man whom, years ago, he had visited in hospital. He felt his heart contract under his ribs. Then, throwing off his morbid fancies, he stooped down and struck the trout's head against a stone, as he had struck the other. The body stiffened: the tail curved up tensely like a spring. He struck it again and then loosened his grip. The second blow had done it: the body was limp and flaccid now: the life was gone.

Gone where? Could the life be something distinct from the body it actuated . . . could it fly out and escape from the killed fish? A shadow . . . a little puff of cigarette-smoke, detaching itself from the fish's mouth . . . floating away? Life must be the same as what some people call the soul . . . The immortality of the soul . . . A fish's soul . . . Jesu, lover of my soul. A flood of the emotion which that hymn always produced in him as a boy. Ancient memories . . . sentimental . . . absurd!

A touch on his face, soft, fluttering. Here he was, standing up to his thighs in water, fishing. A gust of wind was furrowing the water and blowing his line along in a great bow. He reeled in a few yards of it. The breeze stiffened: all his fisherman's skill was needed now, and for the next few minutes his attention was concentrated on throwing a clean line in defiance of the breeze. But it had only been a momentary flurry: soon it had swept on downstream and with the return of calm Dunne dropped back into his former line of thought. . . .

Fishes are cold-blooded creatures without feeling. A comforting idea, but false—mere metaphor and simile drawn from human experience. We know nothing outside our own narrow circle of experience, can never escape into the universal where everything is true and equal. A simple thing to beat the life out of a trout; and yet, when we have done it, what have we done? A mystery. A tremendous act of whose consequences we know nothing. Who can tell? perhaps the death of a fish changes irrevocably the whole hidden scheme of things. And yet, wherever there is life, there must be death. All life devours life, even the sheep and cows that munch grass. Life feeding on life. Life destroying life that it may live. An endless process . . . process . . . progress . . . progression . . . the scheme of things . . . stream of things . . .

The stream had caught his mind again, caressing it, floating it safely away from all those jarring, sharp-

edged thoughts. But now the fish had stopped taking and during the next hour Dunne caught nothing. Yet he fished on, soothed by the peacefully sliding river, his mind sliding with the water over rough and smooth, deep and shallow. Then, discovering that he was hungry, he looked at his watch and began to wade towards the bank.

There he sat down and took out his flask and sandwiches. But before beginning to eat he opened his creel, tumbled out the contents, and arranged them in a row on the grass. They were a nice lot—seven fish ranging from a quarter to half a pound and, at the end, the noble one-pounder. They were dull and gummy now; their clean slipperiness was gone, their iridescence faded. Dunne gazed at them until his mind slipped out of the grooves of habit and again he was gazing at fish for the first time in his life. Strange, unbelievable creatures; mysterious slips of life, swift and spearlike, marvellously designed and coloured. He stared at their eyes; for a man, baffled by man or beast, always stares at the eye, that smouldering window of the spirit, and there finds some partial answer to his question. But these quaint metallic disks, stark as the painted eyes of a mask, told him nothing except that their secret was undiscoverable or that there was nothing to discover. They did not even rebuke him, like the eye of a dead bird or animal, for snatching them from their secret world and slaughtering them. Dunne sighed and next moment shrugged his shoulders. After

all, such questions as he was asking have no answer. Neither philosophy nor religion casts any light on them. To what category, then, can they belong? To poetry, perhaps: and Dunne, being no poet, but a solicitor and a fisherman, threw the trout back one by one into the creel and began to eat his sandwiches.

The sun came out. He looked anxiously at the sky: this would play the devil with his afternoon. But meanwhile it was delicious to feel its warmth on his back, stealing through coat and shirt. He finished his last sandwich, lit a cigarette, and leaned back full length on the grass. Although the sun was still shining, clouds covered more than half the sky: there was certainly some hope, now, for the afternoon. A luxurious drowsiness overcame him: he closed his eyes for a moment and then opened them again. Then he closed them again and this time they remained closed. The cigarette fell from his fingers and lay twining a blue spiral among the tall green grass-blades. . . .

He was still fishing. The little brass rings on his rod had sprouted into green leaf-buds. He was fishing in a stream of liquid gold, the Gulf Stream. All at once he noticed that his line was running out noiselessly . . . longer . . . longer . . . longer. He clasped it to the butt of the rod, gripped it with all his strength. When he had almost given up hope, he succeeded at last in holding it. Then slowly he began to reel in, and as he did so the reel tinkled a little tune like a musical-box. It was a heavy fish—a pound at least. He reeled

away strenuously until he had reeled the cast right out of the water.

A beautiful wooden fish, streaked with scarlet and blue, hung from the end of it. A Chinese fish. Each eye was a gold disk with a daisy in the centre of it. He began to sway the rod so that the fish swung to and fro. When it was at the top of its swing he suddenly dipped the rod and the fish dropped on the bank. But the moment it touched earth it began to cry—a horrible human cry. "No! No!" it cried. "No! No! No!" He stood staring at it, appalled, not daring to touch it. Then, bracing himself, he suddenly put his foot on it and immediately swooped upon it to remove the hook. The fish did not move, but its mouth opened and shut spasmodically like an automatic toy and, to his horror, it began to cry again. But soon its voice flagged, died away, fainter . . . fainter . . . It had become almost inaudible when suddenly, as if summoning its last strength, it shouted aloud a single sharp "Ah!"

Dunne awoke. A shaggy dog stood looking at him wagging its tail. He held out his hand to it and sat up, but the dog flounced away and trotted off along the bank with its tail down. Dunne looked about him. The sun had gone in: conditions were perfect once again. He felt refreshed and clear-headed after his sleep and, scrambling to his feet, he pocketed his flask, took up his rod and creel, and began to work slowly downstream.

During the afternoon he added eight good fish to his catch, and by five o'clock he had got back to the point from which he had started. He reeled in and, securing his cast, waded to the bank. He was looking forward to showing the fish to old Wales. Mrs. Wales would fry the best of them for dinner: she knew how to fry trout perfectly, rolling them first in oatmeal and serving them with melted butter. He climbed up the bank to the little path and, with his rod pointed in front of him, began to make his way cautiously under the elm-trees. In the creel behind him a trout not yet dead kept up a dry, persistent rustling.

As he came out in front of the inn he became aware of something unusual. A little group of people was moving towards the door. They were stooping as if carrying something. A few yards from the bridge an empty motor stood at the roadside.

When Dunne came up with the moving group they had reached the inn door. They were carrying something laid on a large sack, as on a stretcher, and with a sudden constriction of the heart he caught sight, between two of the bearers, of an end of brown skirt hanging over the edge of the sack. Hardly knowing what he did, he propped his rod against the house-wall and, turning his back on the door, walked away towards the standing car. His instinct had been to escape from something unbearable. Then, pausing dazed where the road dipped from the bridge, he saw lying at the roadside between him and the car a white-

handled umbrella. He stooped and gently picked it up and began to carry it to the inn. He felt vaguely that he had found something that he could do for her.

The bearers had vanished indoors. Dunne entered the stone-flagged hall with its pleasant, humble smell of beer and sawdust. A group of women—Mrs. Wales and the three servants—stood with their backs to him at an open door, their heads craning into a great bare room. It was a room unused except in summer-time when large parties came to the inn for lunch or tea. Several people were inside. A table was being moved. Dunne, still holding her umbrella, paused beside the women.

"What happened?" he whispered.

One of the maids turned a white face to him. "The car knocked her down," she replied. "It must have come on her when she was crossing the road."

Another turned. "They come so unexpected over that bridge," she said.

Old Mrs. Wales was leaning against the door-post with her apron to her eyes. Dunne touched her arm. "Is she . . . is she much hurt?" he asked.

The old woman raised her bleared face from the apron and stared at him vacantly. Then her chin began to tremble. "Hurt? She's dead, poor thing!" she whispered.

Twenty-five years later Dunne himself died. He was a bachelor, and his things went to his nephews.

They had spent several days in his house, going through cupboards and drawers. Last of all they looked into the attic. It was half dark, but one of them, rummaging among old hatboxes and portmanteaux, pulled out a creel and a fishing-rod in a canvas case. Both the creel and the case were cloaked with the grey wool of cobwebs.

"I say, look at this!" the young man called to his brother. "I never knew the Uncle was a fisherman."

GATHERING OF THE CLAN

by Eugene E. Slocum

OUR LIVES ARE ALTOGETHER TOO SHORT; THAT'S CERtain. As soon as we get fairly started here, away we have to go somewhere else. Worse still, our very limited existence is mostly splotched with worries and responsibilities. The dull drab of business environment is accepted by custom as being its necessary hue. Murders, thuggery, scandals, embezzlements, political chicanery and all other evils of mankind are spread bountifully before us by the daily press like an endless exhibit in a chamber of horrors. Reeking with such atmosphere, it is no wonder that imagination is becoming atrophied. Our milieu carries us farther and farther away from the blithesome realm of fancy. Never more may we hope to have our own "Arabian Nights."

And yet, let one of our present-day anthropomorphists cast off his formal mantle and go a-fishing in the wilderness if you would behold him transformed completely into a real man; a happy child of nature.

In the twinkling of an eye the millionaire is mentally estranged from all his wealth and its worries; he is elevated to the peerage of sportsmanship on an equal footing with the chastened spirits of the pedantic schoolmaster, the unassuming accountant, the overtired doctor, the underpaid preacher, the grandiloquent lawyer and all the rest who make up the congenial brotherhood of the mountain stream. Once freed from their irksome shackles, these untrammeled grown-ups are in really, truly fairyland.

Behold them now! They are loafing at ease on the spacious porch at general headquarters after a perfect day with the trout, followed by a satisfying dinner. The shades of evening have been drawn very slowly; twinkling stars without number are beginning to cast their glittering sparks through pure air that has never been breathed before. It is inhaled with the fragrant tobacco of many pipes and given back fervently like burnt offerings to a deity. The time for story-telling is at hand. There is the guttural sound of a throat being cleared for action. At once all desultory conversation ceases. The slumbering moon, aroused by the resonance which stirs the rarefied air, peeps inquiringly over the distant rim of the world and stays to listen.

It is the clergyman whom the spirit naturally moves first; his duty, he feels, is to lead his flock.

"My friends," he begins, then pauses impressively. "My friends," he repeats, "I have to-day passed through an experience so strange and still so convinc-

ing that we may look for it to revolutionize our methods of trout fishing." Again he pauses, fearful of the effect upon his spotless reputation if, perchance, any one present should doubt the truth of what he wishes to reveal. Were he speaking from his pulpit, then all must go well. His fishing coat is orthodox enough but his faith in its power to supply the proper background for his almost unbelievable story is not reassuring. If he could now only feel the satisfying discomfort of his clerical collar! He holds the warm bowl of his smoking pipe close in his left hand and with his right he grasps an object lying across his knees, unseen by the rest in the gathering darkness. These employments give him courage and he resumes:

"I was working up through the Hopkins pasture where I found the cattle taking their midday drink and cool-off in the brook. All of them moved deliberately away as I came along except one Jersey heifer. She stood belly deep in the pool just below the leaning beech and seemed perfectly content to stay there. In fact, when she turned her head toward me there was in her great, round, fawnlike eyes a pleading look which induced me to sit on the bank and rest until she might leave of her own accord. While admiring her sleek side and flank my attention was carried to her bag by a series of odd movements there. At first I thought they were nervous twitchings or perhaps were aimed voluntarily at dislodging some pestering fly."

"I can feel that my credulity is about to get stretched," softly breathes the ruddy faced advertising agent, as he settles back to more fully enjoy the process.

Without appearing to hear the interruption, the narrator continues:

"My friends, as we approach the climax you are to understand that I disclaim the privilege of the antinomian. I firmly believe that an untruth might send me to perdition. Now then: riveting my gaze intently upon the udder, I saw that it was being pressed up and pulled down with the same movement as though made by a sucking calf. The cause I could not discern, for the lower portion of the bag was submerged. It must be the work of some water animal, a mink or muskrat, I thought. Yet I dared not approach closer for fear of scaring it off before solving the mystery. I knew that my voice would not carry into the water, so I shouted at the heifer and she took a few steps forward. As she moved into shallower water the surging ceased and with her next step I beheld hanging to one of her teats like grim death a brown trout all of two feet long!"

The men are now leaning forward openmouthed listening with straining ears to this most unusual recital. The advertising agent is pressing something to his lips.

"By rapid observation," continues he of the cloth, "I took in at a glance the intentness of the fish and

even hoped that I might capture it. Acting at once upon this impulse, I stole forward cautiously, crouching like an Indian. To my intense gratification I saw that the fish's eyes were closed tightly in complete absorption like a hungry babe at its mother's breast. A stride and I was within reach! A deft sweep of the net and the monster was mine! I firmly gripped both sides of the landing net, suspending its great weight, and turned sharply toward shore. I then had only one idea in mind. While I well knew that none of you would doubt for a moment what had been revealed to me, I should feel much better to open the trout in your presence and permit you to see the milk gush from its distended paunch. Alas, friends, such was not to be. A strong rap of its tail tore the net from rim to bottom and through it the trout went. As it dropped on its belly against the surface of the stream a perfect geyser of milk spurted from its mouth. Some of it spattered my waders. You are at liberty, my friends, to examine them, as well as the ruined net which I have brought to you as further evidence."

It is apparent that every one believes the minister's story, for no one accepts his invitation. The advertising agent passes something to the doctor, who tilts back his head, which, with an arm, are silhouetted against the everlasting firmament.

"You stated in the beginning that your experience might revolutionize trout fishing," remarks the school-

master eagerly. "Do you mean that in future we shall need equip ourselves with long-handled gaffs?"

"No; with heifers," answers the minister.

. . . . . .

The ambient air becomes laden with an odor of artificial purity as a tall, thin man rises from his seat. He has evidently used carbolic soap through force of habit while washing his hands after manipulating the unsterilized knives, forks and spoons at the dinner table. The more emphatic pungency of iodoform is not required to firmly establish the nature of his profession in the minds of those present. Furthermore, the impress of suffering humanity is plainly seen by the light of the moon to have been stamped indelibly upon his sympathetic face. As he takes a commanding position against one of the porch pillars in the direct line of the waiting ellipsoid, his companions know instinctively that he is a shining light either of medicine or of surgery. . . .

In a voice that is modulated to the proprieties of the sick-room, he now starts the development of his apocalypse.

"It is not my intention to insert a spirit of gloom into this delightful gathering, but in order to prepare your minds for a full comprehension of the phenomenal scientific discovery which I plan to lay before the next International Medical Congress I must remind you that some day we all must die."

"Atta boy," chirps up the life insurance solicitor, shamelessly.

"Is this to be a fish story or sob stuff?" The question is peevishly shot from the far end of the porch against a muffled drum, for the ear that is turned in the insurgent direction ceased to function long ago.

"It seems most appropriate for me to bring this world-important matter first to the knowledge of this imposing group of men, especially as it has to do with both trout and turtles, though its deep significance relates to the *bono beefum.*"

Sweeping the nonplussed audience with a look of superior intelligence, the pedantic schoolmaster explains, "Meaning the human body."

"Precisely," adds the doctor courteously. "Five years ago I became run down from overwork and went up into the White Mountains to rest and recuperate next to the very heart of nature. It rained every day I was there but this did not deprive me of my daily walk, on one of which tramps I ran across a perfectly beautiful little foamy brook. Strangely enough for that wild country, I found no trout in it, but, nevertheless, I fell in love with its active water. After inducing the owner of the farm through which it ran to sell me the fishing rights for twenty-five years, which I then thought would fully cover the unused span of my life, I got him to accept my check covering the entire period, fearing that he or his heirs might otherwise back out because of what I planned

to do. With his receipt stowed safely in my wallet, I sent at once to a private hatchery for a dozen cans of trout fry and when they arrived I dumped them in. There must have been millions of them. I then had no idea of the disastrous result of overcrowding a stream with fish.

"Like waiting patiently for your block of mining stock to make you rich," he continues with a wan smile, "I stayed away from them religiously until last summer, estimating that those four-year-old trout would then average nearly a foot and a half long. What I beheld when I anxiously reached the place where I had given the little fish their freedom went straight to the pit of my stomach like the shock of a crushed finger. I found, to my dismay, that my beautiful brook was as dry as a bone and grass was growing where it had flowed! When the honest farmer explained to me my egregious blunder I had my own stupidity alone to blame. My plans had gone so far askew that the kindly soul had not had the heart to write me about their failure. It seems that I had planted many times more fish than the stream could care for. During the first year, the farmer said, they had plenty of water to play about in after drinking all they wanted. During the second summer their thirsts kept exact pace with the supply. The following year they naturally demanded more drink than ever because of their increased size. This kept narrowing the stream in its bed until there was only room enough for them

to shoulder against each other in close formation. The backs of those at the ends of the ranks were out of the water and these fish suffered cruelly from sunburn during July and August; then the skin peeled off, causing them to die right in their tracks like heroic soldiers. Only the center files were left for the fourth year. While you might think these remaining fish were the fortunate ones, their torture was the worst of all. They fought for drink like thirst-crazed men at a scant waterhole in a desert, standing on their heads to reach the precious and constantly diminishing trickle between the stones in the bottom of what was surely becoming an arroyo. Finally, the last one of them perished. As the sympathetic farmer told me this sad tale he was often compelled to cover his face with his handkerchief."

Tears are one of the evidences of a tender heart. The last remark of the doctor seems to have furnished an excuse for the use of many handkerchiefs, though the sobs are strangely hysterical, coming, as they do, from full-grown men.

"Why didn't the water reach its former level again after there were no fish to drink it?" asks the student.

"That appeared odd to me, too, until the farmer explained it. During their final fight for life some of the fish, unfortunately, discovered all of the various spring sources and they sucked at these water veins so hard that in every case a vacuum was formed, stopping the flow permanently."

The uncanny laugh of a roystering loon on a near-by pond is startlingly inopportune, but the doctor resumes without apparent concern.

"And now I come to the turtle part of my story—the part that has to do with the *bono beefum.* There are already too many painless ways for ending life, but science has thus far been able only to scratch the surface of life extension. Biology proved long ago that characteristics of one organism may be transmitted to another of a different kind, but when it came to inserting the element of old age into mankind there was nothing from which to extract it. This problem of all the past ages, my friends, I have solved! To-day, in the light of my discovery, there is no reason why, if we overcome the attacks of disease, we may not live so long as to look back at Methuselah as one who died in childhood."

The noise of shifting chairs is punctuated by exclamations that continue for some minutes.

"It is a fact of common knowledge that turtles attain to perhaps the greatest age of any living creature, and yet the oldest recorded age of any of these chelonia is about one hundred and sixty years. Therefore, as was proven in the case of Thomas Parr, who died in England at one hundred and fifty-two years, mankind enjoys so closely the honors of age with the lowly turtle that science has recognized no material gain in transferring to the human body the living cells of turtle protoplasm for this purpose, though I believe

that a turtle serum is injected into fishermen who frequent the Adirondacks and Canada in June to make them more adept at snapping the black flies that hover about their faces.

"When I found my stream dried up I decided to spend a few days loafing, making my home with the farmer. One morning he led me into his woods for a stroll. There was one tree, a silver beech, into the trunk of which he had affectionately carved his initials when a boy. A pretty sentiment, I thought. Presently he pointed out to me a turtle, which of course reminded me at once of the transfusion theory with which I had already made him familiar. The farmer remarked that it looked like a pretty old one and I was about to pass on when it hissed at me like an angry gander. Surprised at this crotchety exhibition of temper, I then noticed that it was, indeed, a very aged specimen, for its head was warty and misshapen, and a film covered its dull eyes. Looking still closer, I became interested in a design on its back; so, giving it a tap with my stick, which tap was quickly followed by the withdrawal of its head into its shell, I picked it up and, to my uncontrollable joy, I was able to decipher, notwithstanding the erosion of thirty-eight hundred centuries, the unquestionable date of its birth in the handiwork of its Maker. As plainly as I now see you all before me, there is to be seen emblazoned upon the topmost shield of this real, living organism, which is

now being fed on mushrooms in my laboratory at home, the momentous inscription, '1880 B. C.' "

The Supreme Court judge is whispering to the prosecuting attorney sitting next to him. The latter rises suddenly and, pointing an accusing finger at the guileless doctor, asks in the manner of one of authority:

"Doctor, will you now state to the jury—I say," lowering his threatening hand, "will you please tell us the name of this farmer?"

"Certainly. I can never forget it because of his striking resemblance to his name. He has a very ruddy complexion and one of his legs is bent. His name is Brandywine Cruikshank."

"Thank you. That's all. Next!"

. . . . . .

The portly toy-importer becomes popular at once by saying, "I know very little about trout fishing." Some of his hearers get up from their seats and look through the twilight to see who has had the frankness to make such an extraordinary admission.

"I have heard a friend of mine tell for years what a wonderful sport it is and so I decided to try it. I always thought there was nothing to it. Now I know it.

"But when it comes to salt-water fishing, ask me. I'll bet my car against one of the gadgets you call flies that I can get more pounds of fish in a morning down in Peconic Bay when the weaks or blues or porgies

are running than this whole crowd can catch of trout in an entire season. And I haven't got to tramp all over hellangone to do it either. All I have to do is to sit pretty in a wicker chair on the poop of my yacht. My hook is baited for me and thrown overboard. I don't even have to bother with a pole. I just pull 'em up hand over hand and sit back resting while they are taken off. That's what I call sport. And you've got something to show for your time besides a few little runts such as I use for bait."

"Does salt-water fishing afford one the same opportunity for study and experiment as the dainty brook trout?" asks the student.

"Sure. Why, I've just bought a farm in the mountains and have it already stocked with codfish."

"A farm stocked with codfish!" several exclaim in a single voice.

"Sure. I've got a brook a mile long. At my upper line I've had a wooden trough built and sunk across the stream. Lots of holes are bored through both sides and it is kept full of rock salt. The brook has got to flow through the salt and of course the water becomes briny. I had my man keep boring holes through the trough while I tasted the water that passed through until it got just as salty as the ocean. Then it was ready. Talk about study and experiment! It takes some taster to do this right; not too little and not too much. Yesterday just before I started to motor up here, the fish came that I bought from the Government. There were

10,000 fingerling codfish. At that age they call 'em codlets. They were dumped into the creek and are now having the time of their young lives."

"Who told you that this method of propagating the cod can be done successfully?" inquires the brain specialist.

"Why, the real estate agent who sold me the place."

. . . . . .

"Speaking of real estate agents," pipes up the financial editor of *The Universe*, "reminds me of how one of them helped me beat a competitor to a sale when I was a young man on the road for a wholesale drug house. Another drummer happened to get off the same train with me in a village down in Arkansas, named Wideners. It was so small and snuggled so close to the St. Francis River that you might have shoved it off the bank without creating any noise or making the water any muddier. After we had made our call upon the only druggist in town and had done no business except buy a couple of good five-cent cigars from him, we went to the hotel to wait for the stage.

"We listened to all our genial host had to tell us about the natural gas boom in that region and of the wonderful bass fishing they had in the river until the coming of the last freshet which tore out the bridge that crossed to Madison on the other side and carried all boats away down into the Mississippi. He had started to give us the exact measurements of some of these

monster fish when the telephone bell interrupted. I recall that I felt relief at my escape from being made an accessory to what I perceived was his contemplated crime of exaggeration. Shortly I heard our boniface say, 'Yes, Kunnel Phinizy; two of 'em heah right now.'

"You know how a thing of no real importance will impress itself upon your mind when you've got nothing else to think about. It's like all hands aboard ship getting excited about a little bird that's lost at sea. Then I heard him say, 'Ah suttonly will,' and hang up the receiver.

"He came back to the bar and looked us both over thoughtfully. I perceived that he was trying to make up his mind about something that concerned us. If there was to be any favoritism I was willing to pay for it. So I invited the boss and my competitor as well to have a drink, and at that moment a real estate agent breezed into the party and was made welcome. I liked the fellow from the start. He seemed to believe in himself, and his business card added confirmation. It read, 'I'm Mosby of Memphis'—no initials, no local address. His main business was selling farms, but the first step was the sale of gas machines to the farm owners. With each machine he gave without extra charge a sheet of printed directions telling how to set it up underground and how to pipe from it to distant points close to the surface the alluring odor of natural gas for the frenzied speculators to smell.

"The proprietor squared his obligation by placing

another round before us in order that he might feel free to play fair. Then he said, 'Mah friends, thah's a big awdah waitin' for you-all at Phinizy's drug-sto' 'cross the rivah, an' he's jess bin a-tellin' me the fust one that gits thah gits it.'

"Here was indeed a problem. With all the boats by now out in the Gulf and the bridge gone, the quickest way across the St. Francis was by stage south fifteen miles to Park Place, then west by train ten miles to Marianna, then by another train north fifteen miles to Forrest City, and finally east to Madison. I suggested to my rival that only one of us make the trip and that we split the commission.

"While he hesitated Mosby dropped me a wink and I followed him outside. 'Brother,' he said, 'I reckon I can get you across in a jiffy. You don't need to split no commission with nobody. You can pay me $25 if you use my idea and not a guldurned cent if you don't.'

"Of course, $25 would be only a flea bite out of my commission on the big order that was clamoring to be filled; so I promptly agreed. Then I announced to my contender that I would not bother going all that distance to get an order which I might lose, and that if he got it he was welcome.

"As soon as he had hopped onto the stage, Mosby notified me that all was ready. He escorted me to the river bank where he had installed the mortar that the village used every Fourth to let the world know it was on the map. He had fed its capacious maw with a

pound of gunpowder. Next he had coiled into it a stout fishline with a stub of old lead pipe attached to one end; the other end was tied to the axle. At every two feet along the line there was a baited tarpon hook. The gun was pointed high toward the opposite bank.

"All this I noted with curiosity; it meant nothing at all to me except that this man was wasting my valuable time. I was anxious to get to Madison but refrained from betraying my annoyance. Without bothering to explain, Mosby lit the fuse. 'Boom!' went the squat thunderer and away went the pipe stub to the Madison side of the river. Trailing behind, followed the baited line through the air in a parabolic curve as graceful as a swan's neck."

The narrator pauses, then digresses with a tone of apology and mental penance. He thumbs the coins in his vest pocket as though they were a rosary.

"No matter what the hotel man may have intended to tell us about the size of bass in the St. Francis River, he could not possibly have exaggerated. That day I learned my lesson to never again doubt a fish story, and I never have since questioned one for a moment. That was thirty years ago."

Picking up the thread of his yarn, he says:

"The line had no sooner stretched itself on the water than it became transformed into a huge, twisting, writhing, tumultuous cable of gigantic bass, strung from shore to shore! They raged at their captivity like ferocious lions, tugging this way and that, spend-

ing their enormous energy futilely like people in a panic. Mosby knew; he had this all figured out ahead. If instead, they had all of them rushed up or all rushed down the river in a body they would certainly have carried the mortar along with them like a pebble. The surface of the water below was covered with foam; it must have been froth from their mouths, they were that frenzied. After a while they began to calm down. One by one each of the fish keeled over on its broad side and then came my realization that what I beheld was something more than a mere spectacle arranged for my entertainment.

"Mosby keenly observed that his idea had at last penetrated my dull brain.

"With a graceful sweep of both arms and a low bow with hat in hand, he said, 'Welcome, sir, to Madison.' Instead of paying him in bills I counted out twenty-five silver dollars to lighten my weight. Taking up my sample-case, I walked confidently across this pontoon bridge of bass without even wetting my shoes!"

"Wonderful! Marvelous! Stupendous!" shout the delighted grown-up children.

"By the way," inquires the student, "what held the lead pipe end of the line while you were crossing?"

"It caught in the crotch of a tree."

"Did you ever learn the fate of the other salesman?" asks the minister.

"No; not ultimately. God alone knows that. He grew suspicious because I did not leave town with

him and came back to investigate. While looking about for me he heard the explosion and hurried to the river in time to see me step safely onto the other shore.

"Idiot that he was, he started after me on a run. He ought to have known that the rhythmic impact would set the bridge vibrating and cause its utter destruction. Well, when the line broke he managed to get clear of the pontoons all right and I thought he was going to come through. I climbed up the bank where I could watch him better. He weighed about two hundred pounds and, swimming toward me in his linens, looked for all the world like a big yellow-back frog with all four legs going in a most irresistible manner.

"Just as I was on the point of turning around to beat him to the drugstore I was horrified beyond my power to move or cry out! I give you my word, gentlemen, one of those St. Francis River bass came up and scooped him right off the surface as neatly as you might skim a money-bubble from a cup of tea!"

"How much profit did you make from your sale to the druggist over the $25 you paid Mosby," casually asked the certified public accountant from force of habit.

"I sold Col. Phinizy 1/12 doz. bottles of ague bitters for $1.13 less 50, 50 and 10. He also took a shine to a sample bottle of nerve tonic, so I gave it to him with my compliments."

. . . . . .

During the foregoing recital one of the party who was forced to take an overflow perch on the edge of the veranda with his legs dangling off, has begun pacing back and forth noiselessly on the grass. This is the very man who is saving millions of smokers from nicotine poisoning. Modestly avoiding notoriety and honors, his whole life is secretly devoted to making synthetic tobacco from alfalfa and tonka-beans. He now comes to a stop and, under the benign influence of the radiant heavens, proves himself an unselfish benefactor to the guild of bass fishermen.

"You all know," he declares, "that lakes which are near enough to reach for week-ends during the summer have little to offer nowadays except boating and bathing. The fish have become too darned wise. If ever one is caught by chance it is because it has lost an eye and can't see the boat. So many of them were yanked out and then put back years ago through the demands of the law that the present generation has learned by instinct that a boat means a man and a man means danger. Even the shadow of a boat will scare them away as far as they can get.

"I have a camp on just such a bass lake in the Adirondacks. Up to last year I used to fish as everybody else did and still does. Filled with hope in spite of absolute failure the day before, I would each morning scan both sky and water critically and, for no good reason at all other than a hunch, point the bow of my boat toward some far-distant place.

"My equipment included every kind of bait I could think of, most of which had been secured at great pains from a couple of hundred miles away. Being a veteran, I knew what a capricious fish the bass is. On the welcome arrival of my bait I carefully salvaged each precious morsel that had not passed away in transit.

"You men who fish for bass know just what it means to row from place to place only to find that the fish have gone elsewhere. On a seat which grows harder by the minute you simmer in the broiling sun by the hour and by the end of the day your back seems bent for life. In the silent company of what remains of your hellgramites, crickets, frogs, worms, bass-bugs, minnows, grasshoppers, stoner bullheads and crawfish you return to camp tired and disappointed, swearing that you are through forever. But after dinner and a rest it suddenly occurs to you that you forgot to take along lamper-eels! How odd you never thought of lamper-eels! With the keyed-up tension of a setter on a point, you are sure this is the one bait the bass are waiting for. An order by wire brings a fine supply in three days. Off you start again with the same old hope, ending with the same old result.

"Year after year my summers have been made up of these bitter experiences. Finally I concluded to try out my theory that the fish were there to be caught if not scared to death by a boat. The decision solved the whole problem, for the rest was easy. Ever since, I

have been supplying fish to all my friends who have cottages around the lake. I am now known up there as the greatest bass fisherman on earth."

"Do you intend letting us into the secret?" cautiously asks the student.

"Of course," assures the speaker. "My place includes two points of land jutting into the lake, and an intervening cove. These two points are half a mile apart. Lined up between them is a long, rocky reef about six feet beneath the surface, an ideal feeding place for bass. I have a water-spaniel that has an appetite which would be worth a million dollars if it were mine immanently instead of by proxy. He is always ready to eat. My first step was to train him to expect food whenever a white flag was waved. The flag was a sheet tied to a long, bamboo pole. I provided two of these. Next I rigged up a pair of traces to snap onto his collar and to these traces I attached a six-foot spreader, or you might call it a whiffletree, with three strong lines three feet apart. These lines were one hundred feet long and to each of them were suspended and weighted with small sinkers ten imitation minnows on swiveled lines, each two feet in length. These were applied to only the last fifty feet of the main lines, which left them five feet apart.

"Talk about a mine-sweeper! It proved to be a Golconda finder! My wife became so excited about it that she took entire charge of the camp terminal, while I went around by trail to the other point, taking with me a furled flag, a bag and a meaty bone. As soon as

she saw me on the distant shore she snapped the traces into rings at either side of Nero's collar, straightened out the lines, and pointed me and my waving flag out to him.

"Into the water he leaped. He was a strong swimmer and was only mildly impeded by the constant shocks as the fish grabbed unengaged minnows. After all berths had been taken he pulled the load more steadily and brought it in without sweating a hair. I quickly unsnapped his collar, drew the thirty bass to the shore, bagged them and laid down in the shade while Nero finished his bone and dreamed of more food. When the faithful dog had rested sufficiently I snapped the sweeper to his collar, shouted to my expectant wife, who waved the flag and off he paddled for camp. I reached there with my load in time to take thirty more bass from the hooks."

"A rare piece of headwork," comments the attorney, "but it is my impression that the law does not permit two persons to take sixty bass in a day."

"True, but it says nothing about how many a dog may catch."

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Evidently the gray-haired stock-broker has something on his mind. He shifts uneasily in his seat and then gets up. He can think more readily on his feet. In that position he has no feeling of being under compression.

"I spent my entire boyhood," he begins, "on my father's farm in Connecticut. The growing season is pretty short up there in the Litchfield Hills and dad had a hard time to keep his little family in food and clothes. I went barefoot every summer to save shoe leather. As I became old enough to go to school I also got big enough to help with chores. Still, we could not get ahead. I remember that mother was almost worried to death. Nothing had been paid against the mortgage and she realized that the dream of her life, sending me to college, must be abandoned. When the time came I went to high-school but had to walk five miles twice a day to do it.

"The winters there come early and stay late. One day while on my way to school through unbroken roads piled high with snow, goaded by our poverty to try to find a way out of it all, I formulated a plan which first paid off our mortgage and later put me through college."

There come expressions of sincere interest from some of the listeners. The moon, now fully risen, seems to lend a sympathetic ear to this recital of deprivation and hardship, finally to be overcome by what is now to be divulged.

"We had a fine brook on the farm and there were lots of trout in it in those days. By the end of the following summer I started my scheme working. First I put a barrel into our cellar safe from frost when winter came, and filled it with peat moss and sand.

Then I dug thousands of angleworms and dumped them into the barrel. They worked down through the moss and sand which I sprinkled with a quart of milk every day or so. This was food for the worms. Then I waited more anxiously than ever before for the first cold spell. Meanwhile I had been in correspondence with the swellest hotels in many different cities and found there would be no doubt about marketing my product.

"When the first tightening weather came in November I found, as I had expected, that the worms had grown strong and tough from the milk ration and moss scouring. With a big wad of them nestled against my leg in a pocket of my pants to keep them warm, I went down to the stream."

"Pants?" interrupts the pedant.

"Yes; we did not wear trousers in those days. One of the lusty worms I dropped onto the thin, transparent ice which was forming rapidly and, sure enough, a big trout immediately glued his nose so rigidly against the ice in the expectation that the worm would drop into his mouth that he soon became frozen in beyond his gills and could not have gotten loose if he had tried. Then I quickly disposed more worms every six inches over an area two feet wide by four feet long. I observed with great satisfaction that beneath each of the thirty-two worms a good sized trout was gradually being preserved in all its natural beauty and for as long a time as the ice might be made to last."

"You did not have to inject ether through holes in the ice into their mouths to keep them still while they were being frozen?" the dentist inquires, adding mechanically, "Did it hurt?"

The speaker does not consider the questions relevant and therefore declines to answer. "By next morning the ice was eighteen inches thick. I then sawed out the block."

"Some weather!" comments the potato baron from Houlton, Maine.

"Yes, indeed. I never saw such a beautiful sight as that block of crystal ice with its precious cargo of speckled trout all headed the same way. They looked just as natural as life. Even the expression of eager interest was frozen on their faces.

"I had the cake already sold for a dollar a pound. It was to be used as a restaurant window display. Of course, I wanted to surprise mother and dad with my good fortune, so I had no help to lift it onto the bobsled and deliver it at the station for shipment. Within a few days I was overjoyed to receive my first check. It was for exactly one hundred dollars and came from the Waldorf-Astoria. As soon as I got my plant well under way the money kept piling in on me from hotels and fancy restaurants all over the country. Just as fast as the trout-filled cakes were cut out others were formed in their places. Before spring arrived I had sold a hundred cakes at a dollar per pound, just ten thousand dollars altogether. This paid off the mortgage,

bought mother an organ on which she learned to play 'Home, Sweet Home' first of all, and there was plenty left to put me through college.

"It is perfectly wonderful what golden opportunities lie right at our feet if we only have the sense to pick them up."

"Very true," agrees the construction engineer, "but few of us are strong enough to lift a cake of ice two by four by one and one-half feet, which weighs six hundred and ninety pounds."

"Of course, you found out later that you got short-changed by five hundred and ninety dollars on each cake," observes the nimble-minded accountant.

"I believe you are right, now I come to think of it," concurs the unruffled broker.

"Let's see; when was the Waldorf-Astoria built?" innocently muses the architect.

"Did I say the Waldorf-Astoria? Perhaps it was the old Astor House," suggests the story-teller helpfully. "Yes, of course it was. Isn't it getting a little cool out here? What do you say, boys? Shall we call it a day?"

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